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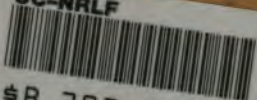
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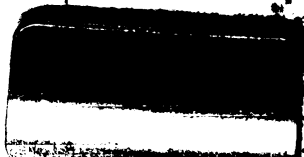
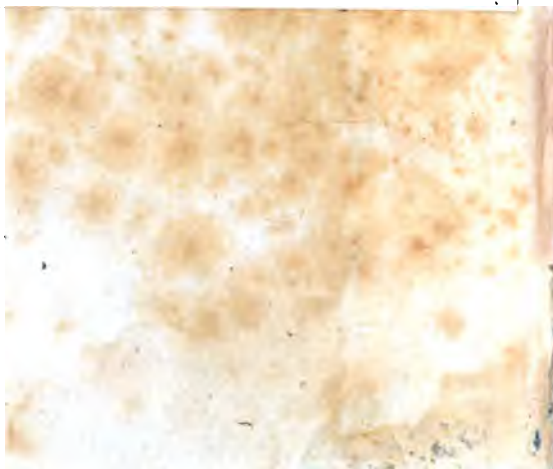
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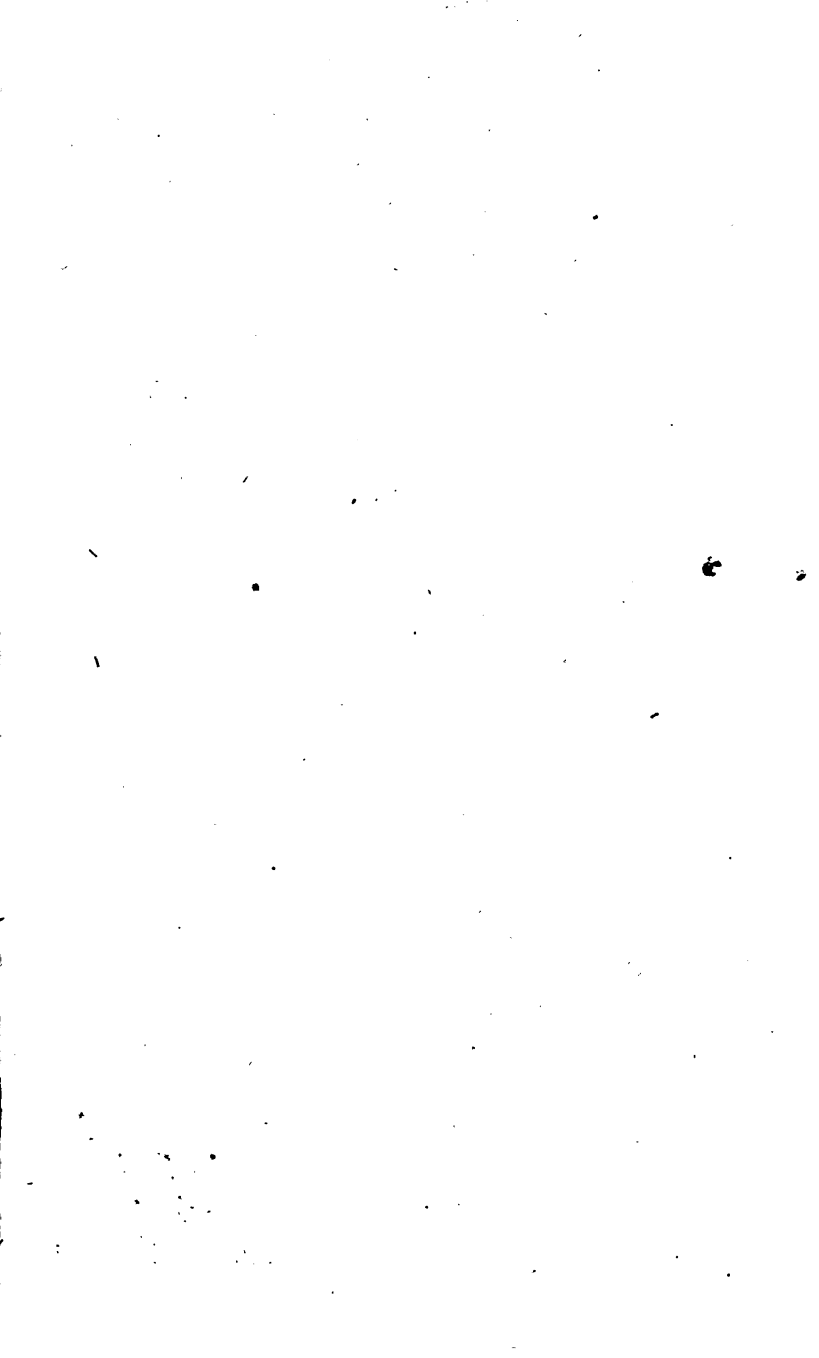
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H. Durant







A  
**DISCOURSE**  
ON  
**THE PROPER SUBJECTS**  
OF  
**CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.**

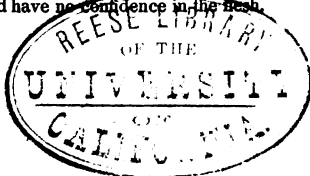
BY SAMUEL ARNOLD,  
*Author of two Discourses on the Mode of Baptism.*

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Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. *Rom. xv. 8.*

Circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith. *Rom. iv. 11.*

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. *Philip. iii. 3.*



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No. 20, Market street.

1829.



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"Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. *Rom. xv. 8.*

"Circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith. *Rom. iv. 11.*

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. *Philip. iii. 3.*"

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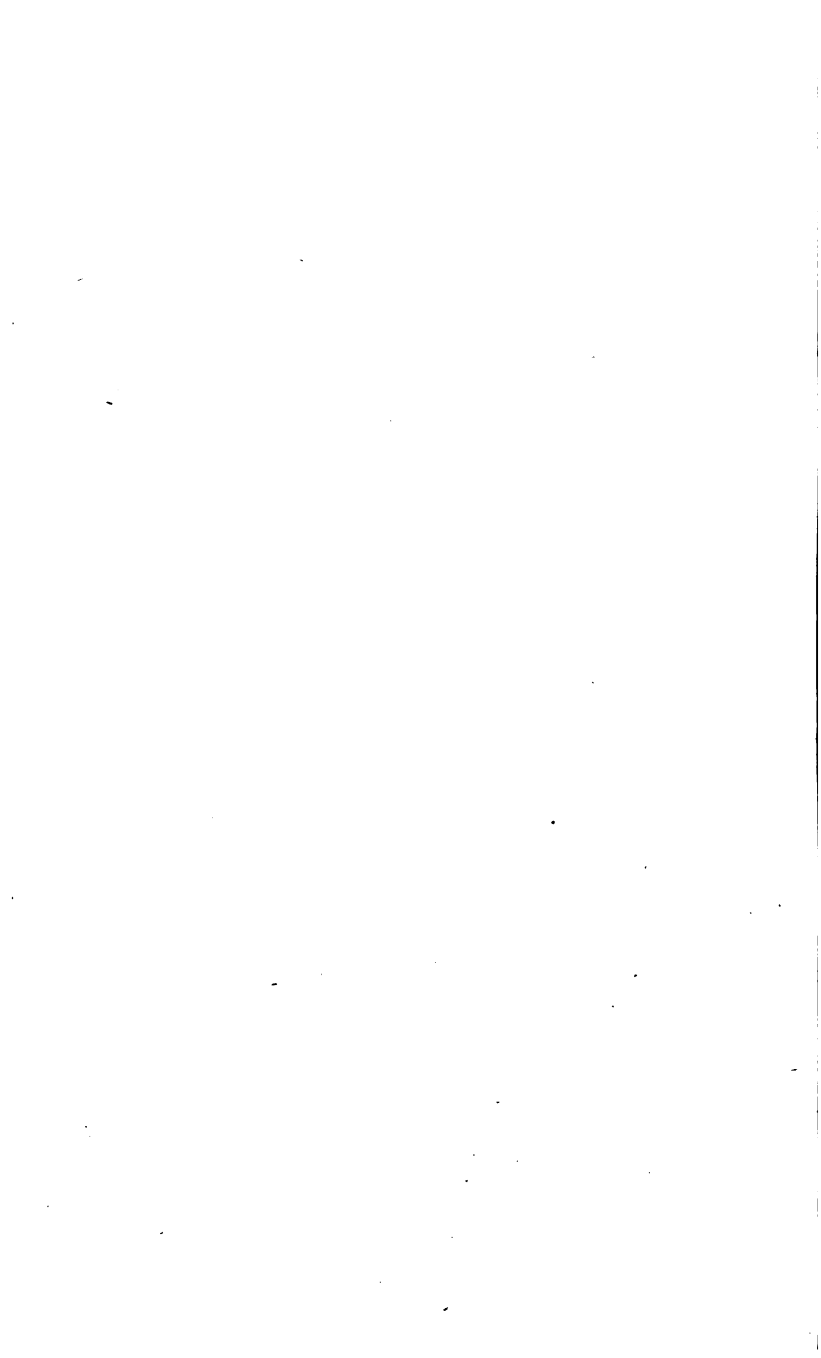
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## DISCOURSE.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19.

GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THESE are the words of Christ to his apostles. He now gives them a special commission—a commission to enlarge his fold, and mark his flock—to increase the number of his disciples, and to apply the mark of discipleship—to put the token of the covenant upon those who are in covenant with God—to proselyte all nations to his religion, and baptize the proselytes. He commissions them to go forth as missionaries of the cross, to teach, and baptize all nations.

The word, here rendered *teach*, is different from the one rendered *teaching*, in the next verse, and means to *proselyte*,\* to *disciple*.

Go ye therefore and *proselyte, disciple*, all nations, baptizing them. Baptism is the token or seal of God's covenant with his church. The covenant is God's gracious plan which he pursues in blessing and saving men.

\* The Greek word here used is *matheteusate*; see it explained by the following commentators. Dr. Doddridge, "*Proselyte all the nations of the earth.*" Dr. Scott, "*Make disciples of all nations.*" Smith, "*Proselyte, disciple.*"

† By *covenant*, in a scriptural sense, and as I use it in this discourse, I understand, *God's established constitution, plan, or promise*. He Gen. ix. promised Noah, that there should not be another flood to destroy the earth. This *promise* is called God's *covenant*, and is said to be between him and every living creature. He also promised to be a God to Abraham and his seed. This *promise* is also called God's *covenant*, and surely, it may refer to *infants* as well as the one established with Noah, which referred to *every living creature*. And the idea of a *mutual compact*, is not implied in one case, more than in the other, except as *obligation* is concerned. We see that God can and does make his covenant or promise so as to include those who at the time are not capable of being a party in the transaction, or of having any agency in it. Mankind, also, act on the same principle, in their temporal concerns.

But to whom is the seal, or token of the covenant, to be applied? Did the Saviour leave his disciples in darkness or in doubt on this important subject? Surely he did not—but he knew well the instruction they needed, and gave them none that was unnecessary. He well knew their advantages for understanding him, when he gave them their commission to baptize. And no thought is suggested, that they were at any loss to know *whom* to baptize. They were in no doubt, it appears, to whom the token of the covenant belonged, or to whom it should be applied—whether to adults *only*, or to infants also. And, if there was no room for doubt, it must have been a very plain case.

It must have been very plain, that all the disciples of Christ—all who gave credible evidence of religion, or were proselyted to his religion, should be baptized. Even so my beloved Baptist brethren will say. In this we are happily united, and can go hand in hand, and heart with heart, as the disciples of Christ always should. But one step farther and we must part a little; but we will part as brethren, offering no abuse, but loving each other with a pure heart fervently—praying for the peace of Jerusalem, and preferring it to our chief joy, till the watchmen of Zion shall lift up the voice and sing together, when they “shall see eye to eye.”

The parting point is this—From my text and the circumstances in which it was spoken, I find occasion to state

This doctrine, namely—

*It clearly appears, that it must have been very plain to the apostles, and may be very plain to us, that baptism, the token of God's gracious covenant, should be applied to the infants of believing covenanting parents.*

As this doctrine appears very plain and important to me, it will be my object in this discourse to make it appear so to others. But I will be careful to speak the words of truth and soberness, and to speak them in love—in love to Christ and his cause, and all who love him, and with a tender concern for those who do not.

If you would see how this appears plain, consider candidly and prayerfully, the passages of Holy Scripture

quoted and referred to in this discourse. Consider, also, the following arguments.

1. The text does not exclude infants from baptism.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

To shew that this passage does not exclude infants from baptism by the use of the word *teach*, I remark,—

The form of expression, used in the text, is agreeable to language in scripture use, and common use, which does not exclude infants.

It is agreeable to the use of *scripture* language.

The apostle Paul says; “This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” By this passage, the apostle did not intend to exclude infants from food. Neither did he mean to exclude the sick, or the aged, or the infirm, from food, and confine the privilege of eating to those who are capable of working. So the text does not exclude infants from baptism, and confine it to those who are capable of being taught.

Take another passage,—“He that believeth not shall be damned.” Does this exclude infants from salvation, and confine it to those who are able to exercise faith? Can no infants be saved? This passage, certainly, excludes infants from salvation, as much as the text does from baptism. For infants are as capable of being taught, as they are of exercising that faith which comes by teaching. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Persons must hear and be taught before they can believe. What shall we say then to the passage, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” Shall we say that it excludes all infants from salvation? or shall we not rather say, it refers to those who are capable of being taught; and exercising faith, and excludes no others from salvation. So the text does not exclude infants from baptism. See other passages also.

The form of expression, used in the text, is also agreeable to *common* use.

Ministers often preach the Gospel in the house of God, and in private houses, and teach their hearers the way of

Mark  
xvi. 16.

Romans  
x. 17.

Luke  
xiii. 3, 5.  
Acts  
xvii. 30.

salvation. And if there is *one*, or if there are even *ten* children present, who are not able to understand the Gospel, and learn the way to heaven, by human instruction; still, they say, that they preached the Gospel to all the assembly, and to all that were in the house—and they speak properly, and others think they do. Such a method of speaking is common, and considered proper. But they do not mean by this, that there were no infants in the assembly.

We see then that the form of expression used in the text, is scriptural, common, and proper; even when such a form is not directed against infants, or designed to set them aside. Neither is the text directed against infants, nor designed to set them aside from baptism. But let us pursue this point a little farther, and look at the *order* of the words. Some contend that children must be taught, because the word *teach*, in the text, comes *before* the word baptizing. And they argue in the same way from the passage, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Because the word *believeth*, here, comes before *baptized*, therefore, they say, children must believe before they are baptized. But I answer, there are passages in which baptism is spoken of before being born of the Spirit, and having a new heart. This is the case in John iii. 5; “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26; “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean—a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” But these passages do not prove that persons must be baptized before they are born of the Spirit, or before they have a new heart.

I answer again. The Scriptures do not always mention things just in the order in which they are to take place, or in which they have taken place. Moses, in speaking of the children of Israel passing through the sea, Exodus xiv. 21. says, “The Lord made the sea dry land and the waters were divided.” Here he speaks of the sea being made dry land, before he mentions that the waters were divided.

I answer once more. The practice of infant baptism is perfectly consistent with the passage, “He that believ

eth and is baptized shall be saved.”—I will illustrate this point.

Here is a man who believes in infant baptism. A child is born to him and he has it baptized. The child grows up, and experiences religion—that is, he *believes*. He is about to be received into the church, and this question is asked,—Is he baptized? Yes, is the answer. He believes, then, and *is* baptized. And no one can prove that this is not agreeable to the text, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” For the text does not say he that believeth, and is *afterwards* baptized; or, he that believeth and *shall be* baptized. Neither can any one prove, from this passage, that baptism after believing is not agreeable to it; for it does not say, he that believeth and *has* been baptized; but, He that believeth and *is* baptized shall be saved.

The object for which the passage is presented, is this—to shew what qualifies for the kingdom of God—to shew what *saves* men, namely; that faith which leads a man to *obey*—which leads him to submit to the ordinances of God, baptism among the rest. This is the great object of the passage. The stress is laid on *believing*, in order to be saved. This is evident from the following words, “He that believeth not shall be damned.”

But here let it be observed particularly, that teaching, and faith, and repentance, must go before baptism, on our principles, as well as on the principles of our Baptist brethren.

According to our principles, no adult is to be baptized before he has been taught, and given evidence of faith and repentance. No parent has a right to baptism, for himself, or his children, before he believes; but then, he may be baptized, and all his straightway. We baptize no household, till the head of the household has been taught, and given evidence of being a Christian.

Were we in the circumstances of the apostles, preaching the Gospel to those who had never before heard it, we certainly should not baptize them before they had been taught the way of salvation, and given evidence that they had cordially embraced it. But having this evidence, should one say, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” we should answer, “If thou believest with all Acts viii. thine heart, thou mayest.” And should many, 36, 37.



in anxiety, ask, what shall we do to be saved, we should not think of giving baptism any earlier place in our answer than the Apostle did, "Repent and be baptized." To give baptism any earlier place than the Apostle, in the same circumstances, would be contrary to our principles and practice.

As to the evidence necessary to attend this doctrine, if we had none better than Moses presented in favor of the resurrection, in one verse, it would be our duty to believe it. "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Here the doctrine of the resurrection is not taught explicitly, but implicitly. It is implied. For the Lord is not a God of the dead, but of the living. But the resurrection is not taught more plainly, in this passage, than infant baptism is in very many. Take the covenant of God with his people, (Heb. viii. 10,) "I will be to them a God." The token of this covenant he commanded them to put upon their children, and they did it for thousands of years; and he did not tell them to withhold it when he changed the token. Here infant baptism is as really implied, and as plainly taught, as the resurrection was when the Lord declared himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The want of explicit warrant would no more justify us in disbelieving infant baptism, than it would the Sadducees in disbelieving the resurrection of the dead.

It has been shewn, that the word rendered *teach* in the text, means to proselyte or disciple. And in order to illustrate the doctrine of this discourse, I remark,

## 2. Infants may be the disciples of Christ.

I know that some of our brethren consider it altogether inconsistent with the situation of children to call them disciples of Christ. But let us think on this a little. A disciple is a scholar—this is the meaning of the word. And a child is a scholar before he learns his lesson, as well as afterwards. He is reckoned a scholar, when he is committed to the care of the instructor, or has his name put down with others who belong to the school, whether he puts his name down himself, or his parents put it down for him. The church is the school

of Christ. The names of all those to whom the token of God's gracious covenant is applied belong upon the records of the church. They are specially connected with the church as her children, included in her covenant, committed to her watch, and care, and prayers. And they are in a special manner committed to God—devoted to him—cast upon him as the Psalmist was. He says, "I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my" birth. Psalms  
xxii. 10.

Parents should train up their children in the way they should go. This is the command of God. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." But what is the way in which the child should go? The child should devote himself to God, to be instructed and sanctified.—The parents then should devote him to God. The child should dedicate himself to God *publicly*. The parents then should dedicate him to God publicly. The child should commit himself to the watch, and care, and prayers of Christians, and walk with wise men, that he may be wise. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." The parent, then, should commit him to the affectionate and prayerful attention of the wise and good. The child should put down his name with the followers of Christ, or, as it is written, "Subscribe with his hand unto the Lord." The parent, then, should subscribe for him, when he cannot subscribe for himself, and act for him, when he cannot act for himself, as he would sign a writing, and act up promptly to duty, to secure an earthly estate for the child. And as he would afterwards persuade the child to ratify what he had done, to secure for him an earthly inheritance, so should he, but with great earnestness, persuade him to subscribe with his own hand unto the Lord, and so take hold of the everlasting covenant, which is well ordered in all things and sure; that it may be all his salvation, and all his desire. Prov.  
xiii. 20.

3. Infants have been disciples of Christ, in the highest, and most important sense—that is, they have been sanctified, formed to his image, and prepared for his kingdom.

Samson is called a Nazarite, (that is, sanctified or consecrated) unto God from the womb. Judges  
xiii. 5.

1 Sam. i. 28. It is said of Samuel, in his infancy, that he "worshipped the Lord."

Jere. i. 5. The Lord says of Jeremiah, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." The Lord told Zacharias that his son John should "be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."

Luke i. 15. 4. God connects children with their parents in covenant, and dispenses his blessings and curses accordingly.

God made a covenant with Adam, in which his children were connected with him, and deeply interested—and had he continued obedient, he and his children would have found the blessings of the covenant a glorious inheritance. But he disobeyed, and he and they felt the frown and curse of God. "And we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now."

Romans viii. 22. God made a covenant with Noah. In this covenant his children were included, and so were we. The token of the covenant also was designed for our good, and we enjoy it.

A covenant connexion, between parents and children, is held up prominently to view, illustrated and confirmed, and enforced, by the manner in which God has dispensed his blessings and curses, from Adam to the present time.

I therefore remark,

5. God bestows blessings upon children for their parents' sake.

He blessed Jacob and Solomon for their fathers' sake, and many others in like manner. The parents of David, and Samuel; Obadiah, Samson, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John, and Timothy, were professors of religion, and their children were distinguished as the favorites of Heaven.

Special blessings have often been bestowed upon children for such reasons as these; "For thy father Abraham's sake."—"For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."—"For David my servant's sake."—And such children are "beloved for their fathers' sakes."—"They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." On the other hand,

Gen. vii. 1.  
Rom. xi. 28.  
Isaiah lrv. 23.

little ones are often destroyed on their parents' account. Such is the connexion between them that God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. Deut. ii. 34.

But if God has special blessings for children on their parents' account, it is highly proper that the parents should enjoy, and improve the token of such blessings. It is calculated to encourage, and strengthen, and urge them forward in parental duty. And this is the case, when the covenant and the token are understood, and embraced, as coming from God, to aid us in the way to heaven. And if it is right that children should have special blessings by the agency of their parents, and on their account; it must be right that they should have the token of the blessing. If one is agreeable to the will of God, the other must be.

But I will mention one other instance, in which children were blessed for their parents' sake. "By faith Noah being warned of God, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." And the reason that the Lord gave for calling him and his family into the ark was this; "For thee have I have seen righteous." Hebrews xi. 7.  
 "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us."\* "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord—His seed shall be mighty upon the earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed." "Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them." "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people." Genesis vii. 1.

6. It is reasonable, and scriptural, that grace, as well as sin, should abound, in the connexion between parents and children. 1 Peter iii. 21.

\*—" (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.)" 'In this baptism the parent who has the righteousness of faith, answers a good conscience towards God, by complying with his requirement, according to the like figure presented in the case of Noah; Come thou and thy family into the ark.' Thus children are blessed on their parents' account, as the children of Noah were on his account. Psalms cxii. 1, 2.

**Romans** Sin has abounded in this connexion. "By  
v. 12. one man sin entered into the world." Such  
was the connexion between Adam and his children, that  
they became sinners in consequence of his sin. And  
such has been the connexion between parents and chil-  
dren ever since. And is not the remedy, provided for  
the ruins of the fall adequate to the disease, and adapted  
**Romans** to its operations? "For as by one man's dis-  
v. 19, 20. obedience many were made sinners; so by the  
obedience of one shall many be made righteous.—But  
where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

**Exodus** 'For the Lord is a jealous God, visiting the  
xx. 5, 6. iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto  
the third and fourth generation of them that hate him;  
but showing mercy unto thousands of generations of them  
that love him.' And as the *natural* connexion between  
parents and children so exposes them to destruction;  
how reasonable is it, that God should establish a *gracious*  
connexion, as favorable to their salvation. How eminent-  
ly wise and proper!

7. God established his gracious covenant with Abra-  
ham and all Christians, for an everlasting covenant. The  
covenant is this; "To be a God unto thee, and to thy  
seed after thee. I will establish my covenant between  
me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations  
for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee and to  
thy seed after thee." All Christians are Abraham's seed.  
I repeat it; all Christians—all that are Christ's, are Abra-  
**Gal.** ham's seed. "If ye be Christ's then are ye  
iii. 29. Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the  
promise." The Lord is *your* God, as well as

28. the God of Abraham. "For ye are all one in  
Christ Jesus." And his covenant is essentially one,  
though renewed, and securing different temporal bless-  
ings at different times, according to the various circum-  
stances of his people. This same covenant, "I

**Lev.** will be your God and ye shall be my people,"  
xxvi. 12. has been renewed, and is called a *new* covenant. It is  
called new in comparison of the one made with Israel

**Jer.** when they were led out of Egypt.\* "In that he  
xxxi. 32. saith a *new* covenant, he hath made the first

\* The covenant made at Sinai, or Horeb. Deut. v. 1—4.

old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." The covenant is also new in the same sense that the commandment to love one another is new, "Because the darkness is past and the true light now shineth." But though the covenant is new in these respects, yet, like the commandment, it existed long before the days of our Saviour's incarnation. The God of his people, is a title in which the Lord delights. He said to Moses; "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Some suppose it was only a temporal covenant, and secured only temporal blessings. But the Scriptures plainly teach us, that it was an everlasting covenant, and secured a resurrection to future life and glory. "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." "God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." Here we are taught, that God would have been ashamed to be called their God, had he not prepared for them a Heavenly city, according to his covenant, which included their resurrection to future life and glory. He is the God of him that overcometh.

Heb.  
viii. 8-13.

1 John  
ii. 8.

Exod.  
iii. 15.

Luke  
xx. 37.

Heb.  
xi. 16.

Rev.  
xxi. 7.

There are also many other considerations, presented in the Scriptures, which shew, that the covenant, established with Abraham and his seed, is *continued*; that it is highly *spiritual*, and *gracious*; and that it has its fulfilment only, by the *coming of Christ*, and the *saving power of his Gospel*.

St. Paul tells us, that Abraham is the father of all Christians, as it is written in the covenant. The covenant then is fulfilling, as fast as people become the children of Abraham by faith, and will continue as long as they are his children; that is, as long as they are Christians, even forever.

Rom.  
iv. 16, 17.

The promise, that Abraham should be the heir of the world, by being made the father of all nations, and having them blessed in him as his children—this promise

was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Again, it is of faith, that it might be by grace, &c.

Rom. Christ was a minister of the covenant of  
iv. 13, 16. which circumcision was a seal, to confirm it.  
Rom. xv. 8. It was confirmed in Christ.  
Gal. iii. 17.

It included the promise of a Saviour, and the blessings of salvation. It was only through Christ, that Abraham could be made the father of believers, for they became his children, by faith in Christ. It is in this way that the nations are blessed in him, according to the covenant.

Gal. The Gospel was preached to Abraham, in the  
iii. 8. covenant God established with him.

Gal. iii. In this covenant, faith was the condition of  
Rom. iv. justification.

In view of these things, it is abundantly manifest, that the covenant established with Abraham and his seed, is continued, and that it is highly spiritual and gracious. Some, however, have thought the covenant peculiar to the

Rom. Jews. But, "Is he the God of the Jews only?  
iii. 29, 30. Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes of the Gentiles also; seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith."

And here, let it be particularly observed, and remembered, that circumcision was the token of this covenant, till Christ came, and instituted baptism as the mark of his flock.

8. The covenant, which God established with Abraham and all Christians, included\* their children in such a manner, that the token of the covenant belonged to them, and was applied to them, by the command of God.

Temporal blessings have been connected with this covenant, or included in it more or less, according to the circumstances of the church. "Godliness is" now, and  
1 Tim. always has been, "profitable unto all things,  
iv. 8. having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

But the sum and substance of the covenant was this,

\* See note on page 5.

“To be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.”  
 God says to Abraham, “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.”

This covenant included infants. And whatever may be doubtful about the *manner* in which it included them, or what, or how much, it included for them—one thing is not doubtful, but this one thing is certain, it included them in such a manner, that the token of the covenant belonged to them, and was applied to them, by the command of God.

Please to remember, my hearers, that this covenant was established with Abraham and with all Christians. And if the token of this covenant belonged to the infants of Abraham and other Christians, and was applied to them; it also belongs to the infants of Christians now. The change of the seal, or token, does not alter the covenant, any more than changing the seal of a letter alters what is written in the letter.—All with whom the covenant was established, for an everlasting covenant are still included in it, if God has not *excluded* them from it, for no other one has any right to exclude them.—And all, who are included in the covenant, have a right to the seal or token of the covenant. All Christians then have this right for themselves, and for their children—for they were included in the covenant themselves, and their children were included in such a sense, that the token of the covenant belongs to them, and was applied to them, by the command of God. And what God has thus joined together, let not man put asunder.

9. Baptism has no higher, or more spiritual character, than circumcision.

The circumcision of the flesh had a signification highly spiritual. It pointed to the heart—to its natural corruption, and its renewal by divine grace. This is evident from the following passages; “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart:—And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. Cir-

Gen.  
xvii. 7.

Deut.  
x. 16.

Deut.  
xxx. 6.



Jer. cumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away  
 iv. 4. the foreskins of your heart. Circumcision is  
 Rom. that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the  
 ii. 29. letter. Circumcision, a seal of the righteous-  
 iv. 11. ness of the faith. For we are the circumcision,  
 Philip. which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in  
 iii. 3. Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the  
 flesh. Ye are circumcised with the circum-  
 Col. ii. 11. cision made without hands, in putting off the  
 body of the sins of the flesh."

The obligations that circumcision involved, were great, and when they were performed, it was profitable. "For  
 Gal. v. 3. I testify again to every man that is circumcised,  
 Rom. that he is a debtor to do the whole law. For  
 ii. 25. circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the  
 Rom. law. What profit is there of circumcision?  
 iii. 1, 2. Much every way.

Col. ii. Spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism  
 11, 12. are spoken of as being the same.

According to the meaning of circumcision then, it was no better suited to the character and condition of infants, than baptism.

10. Isaac was a child of the promise of the Lord to Abraham, "To be a God to him and his seed." And this promise, so included Isaac's infants, as to give him a  
 Gal. right to the token of it for them. "Now, we,  
 iv. 28. brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." We then, like Isaac, have a right to the token of the promise for our infants.

11. In revivals of religion God is richly manifesting a special regard for those who have been dedicated to him in baptism.

"During the year past, the churches belonging to the Synod of Kentucky have been visited with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and from three to four thousand additions have been made to them. A very large proportion of these converts were, in early life, consecrated to God by Baptism."

"In 1815, there were received into the second church in Boscawen, at one time, thirty-one; twenty-one of whom were baptized in infancy. A young man, educated a Baptist was a spectator of this interesting scene. He

was filled with wonder and disappointment, that ten only of this number were then to be baptized. As he returned from meeting, he asked an aged professor, if this were not an uncommon case, that so great a proportion of the converts were baptized in infancy? The professor answered no,—it was very common for far the largest proportion of converts in a revival, to be those who were dedicated to God in infant baptism. The young man replied, with no little feeling, ‘*If it be so, then surely, God has respect to his everlasting covenant.*’ And (says the pastor of the above mentioned Church) I have the satisfaction to add, that this young man, some time after this, became hopefully pious, and has, for years, been a very exemplary, active, and influential member of the church of which I am pastor.” The same church, “in 1820, received at one time twenty-eight; of whom twenty-one had been baptized in infancy.”

About one hundred were received to the church in Canterbury, in 1810 and 1811. Only twelve of this number were baptized at the time of their public profession.

Many more such facts might be mentioned; and is it not remarkable that they so frequently exist in places, where those dedicated to God in their infancy constitute but a small proportion of the whole?

“As fruits of a revival in Francistown, in 1812, seventy-nine were added to the church. Seventy-five of this number were baptized, on the faith of their parents, in early life.”

In the west parish of Chester, during the nine years ministry of the Rev. Clement Parker, *fifty* professed religion. *All but one* had been devoted to God in baptism by their parents. Surely, God *has* respect to his everlasting covenant, and to the *children* of the covenant who are *marked* for him.

12. Infant baptism promotes the design of the relation between parents and children.

This relation is the most important, tender, and endearing. Its design is to train up children for happiness, usefulness, and for heaven. It involves duties of high obligation and responsibility, such as are wisely adapted, as means, to promote the high and holy design of the

relation. But in order to this, the parent must be brought to act up to his obligations, and discharge his duty faithfully. And so much is depending here—the duty of the parent is so important—his responsibility so great, that if he is a Christian, he often feels a tender solicitude, and is ready to sink under his burthen.—His spirit is pressed—his heart labors, big with its emotions of parental tenderness, and endearment, mingling with his sense of accountability, and increasing his anxiety for the eternal welfare of his children, which God has committed to his care, and for whom he is, in a measure accountable. In this situation, the parent needs special support and encouragement. And here God meets him on the foundation of his everlasting covenant—He presents it, showing that he is rich in blessings, for parents, and for children—that he has ever connected them in covenant—regarded the connexion with peculiar interest, and crowned it with special blessings. This is his memorial unto all generations. He encourages the parent to take hold of the covenant, and enter his name for himself, and

Josh. for his children, resolving, with Joshua, “As xxiv. 15. for me and my house we will serve the Lord.”

The Lord presents his deed of the heavenly inheritance, which is himself, as the portion of his people; to be a God unto him, and giving him all needed encouragement, that he will be the God of his children also, if he is faithful in the discharge of parental duty. But here, the parent trembles again—and now God meets him again—he presents him a *token* of his gracious regard to himself, and his children. And now, feelings which would otherwise be smothered in his bosom—feelings which would otherwise sink or be restrained, under the awful weight of his responsibility, he is encouraged to put forth in a faithful discharge of parental duty—I say, baptism here affords the parents special encouragement, for it is a token or pledge of the covenant faithfulness, and compassion, and assistance of God, to help his infirmities, and urge him and his family forward in the way to heaven. Baptism makes a merciful demand for feelings, most tender and endearing, high and holy; and whilst it makes the demand, it presents a pledge of divine assistance, to encourage, and animate, and strengthen us, in the work

of training up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Thus it promotes the high design of the relation subsisting between parents and children.

### 13. God can covenant with infants.

This has been done. Moses says to the Israelites, "Ye stand this day, all of you before the Lord your God; your captains, your officers, with all the men of Israel, Deut. xxix. your little ones, your wives, that thou shouldest 11—13. enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day."—"That he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." In this case, God covenanted with infants, by the appointed agency of their parents.

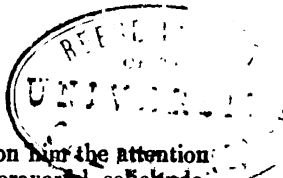
On this same occasion, God entered into covenant with those who were *absent* also. It is written; "I make this covenant, and this oath, with him that is not here this day." Those who were present, were the appointed agents for those who were absent, and were called upon to be witnesses to what God had done for them—to make known to them his covenant, and to persuade them to embrace it.

It may appear strange to some of you, my beloved hearers, that God should thus covenant with people, by the agency of others. But I entreat you to consider this point well; for it certainly appears to me, that here is much to inspire love, and gratitude, and prompt obedience. Let us then make this inquiry; Why does God covenant with infants by the agency of others? It is, that he may take them in season, before they are corrupted, and betrayed, and lost, and bind them to his covenant—to his people—to his altar—to his throne—to himself—and to the joys of his kingdom, by the bonds of his covenanted mercy and faithfulness. He would thus hold them back from the darkness of his frown—from the consuming fire of his displeasure—and the torment of an everlasting separation from him, in outer darkness, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Such ideas as these are suggested, as the reason of God's covenant transactions with the little ones, and the absent, in the instance we have just noticed.

You know, my respected hearers, that it is common and natural for man, "to bless himself in his heart," that he does not pretend to be a Christian—that he has not covenanted with God, or joined the church, or reckoned himself among the number of the pious. As he has not done this, he feels much more at liberty to walk in his own ways, saying, *I shall have peace*, however it may be with those who do not live up to their profession. And if my parents covenanted for me, and had me baptized, it was not *my* doings. I do not wish to be so religious. It appears that God had persons of this character in view, in the instance under consideration. And he covenanted with the infants, and the absent to destroy the force of their objections, and restrain the wickedness of those whose hearts would turn away from him, and rejoice that they have not entered into covenant with him, and are, therefore, more at liberty, and less in danger, while they live in sin. He would not have them feel this liberty, but he would have them feel that they are exposed to his curse, if they *disregard* the covenant, and if not, that they may inherit his blessings. This is according to what he tells us. He made the covenant, lest there should be man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away from the Lord,—lest there should be a root that beareth gall and wormwood; and it came to pass, when he heareth the words of the curse, (for breaking the covenant) he bless himself in his heart, saying, *I shall have peace*, though I walk in the imagination of my heart. But says Moses; the Lord will not spare him—all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.

God is well acquainted with that principle of human nature, which leads a man to "bless himself in his heart," that he has not entered into covenant with God, or joined the church, or reckoned himself among the pious; and then to bless himself in his heart again, that he is more at liberty to live as he pleases, saying, *I shall have peace*, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst. He knows that folly is bound up in the heart of a child, and that the way he would take is the way of death. He therefore kindly besets him at his very entrance into life, and compasses his



path with favor. He draws forth upon him the attention of his parents, and awakens their prayerful solicitude, and their faithful exertions, and encourages them to be workers together with him, for the child's salvation.

14. Infants are spoken of as breaking the covenant of God, when the token of it was not applied to them. "The uncircumcised manchild, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii. 14. This is said on account of the close religious connexion, which God had established between children and their parents who were in covenant with him. If *they* were in covenant with God, so were their *infants*. God covenanted with these infants, and they broke his covenant, if the token was not applied to them. But in such cases the guilt rests upon their parents; therefore, God met Moses, and sought to kill him, because he did not put the token of the covenant upon his child.—He neglected to circumcise his child, and was guilty. "And it came to pass by the way, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him." Exodus iv. 24. All who are included in the covenant, have a right to its seal or token, and it should be applied to them. The covenant, of which circumcision was a token, is not done away. God established it with Abraham and his seed, that is, with all Christians, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto him and his seed after him. In this high and special sense, he is now the God—the *portion* of his people, according to the covenant of promise. And their children are included with them in this covenant, unless God has excluded them from it; and the token though changed, should be applied to them. The change of the token no more justifies parents in neglecting to put it upon their children than the change of a mark which a man had long put upon his flock, would justify his servants in neglecting to mark the lambs.

15. God calls the infants of his professing people, *his* children, which they have born unto him.

"Thou hast slain *my* children—thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast *born unto me*, and these hast thou sacrificed." Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. These parents were professors of religion. They had taken the

covenant of God upon them, and professedly consecrated themselves and children to his service. Their children were brought into a covenant relation to God, and his people, which he has ever regarded with peculiar interest. And although their parents had degenerated, and become wicked; yet, even their degeneracy did not deprive God of his covenant right in their children, or break the established connexion of the children with the church. He, therefore, asserts his right *to* them, and his interest *in* them, as children of the covenant, to whom his seal belonged. It is on account of this covenant relation to him, and his church, that he calls these infants *his* children, which were born unto him. It is also on account of this covenant relation to God, and consecration to his service, and separation from the heathen, that the people of Israel, including their infants, are called "an holy people." They are repeatedly called an holy people, and their children the holy seed, as it is written; "For thou art a *holy people* unto the Lord thy God." "Ye are the children of the Lord your God." "The *holy seed* have mingled themselves with the people of those lands."—"The *holy seed* shall be the substance thereof." Here we can see plainly, that God reckons the children of his professing people *his* children, and calls them *holy*, and the *holy seed*, because they were included in his holy covenant, and connected with his church by a religious rite, which was a mark of separation from the heathen, and consecration to God. Let this be remembered—they were called holy, not because they were holy at heart, but because they were included in God's holy covenant, and had the token of the covenant applied to them, and they were thus connected with his church, and marked as the lambs of his flock.

On the other hand, those who were not included in the holy covenant, or did not have the token applied to them, and were not connected with the church, nor marked for God—such—all such, were considered uncircumcised and unclean. They were so called, till they had united with Israel in holy covenant. This distinction was made by God, and too little regarded by the Jews. It was unlawful for the Jews to marry with those of other nations,

who did not unite with them in their religion. And after they had unlawfully married with such, it was their duty to put them away, and the children which were born of them, also, for they were both reckoned unclean. Therefore, we find this confession, "We have Ezra trespassed against our God, and have taken x. 2, 3. strange wives of the people of the land. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that trembled at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the law." But when both of the parents were believers, or professed to be, their children were called holy, because they were brought into holy covenant, and devoted to God, and connected with his church. For these reasons, the children were called holy, when *both* of the parents were believers; and for the same reasons, the children are now called holy, when *one* of the parents is a believer. "Else were your children unclean 1 Corin. vii. 14. but now are they holy."

The believers at Corinth were uncertain, whether it was their duty to dwell with their unbelieving companions, or to put them away. They therefore wrote to the apostle Paul, on the subject, and he gave them this answer; "If any brother hath a wife that believeth 1 Cor. vii. 12—14. not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but *now* are they holy." Their children, then, were not treated as unclean, but holy, that is, they were included in God's holy covenant, devoted to him in baptism, and connected with his church as her children. This is a plain fact appealed to by the apostle. The children are *holy, in a covenant sense*, and therefore, they should have the token of the holy covenant applied to them, as God commanded concerning the holy seed. It is as much the duty of parents to apply the token to their children *now*, as it ever was. Indeed, God is reaching farther after the beloved offspring of believers. He *now*



calls them *holy*, and considers them fit subjects for the seal of the covenant, when *one* parent is a believer, the same as he formerly did, when *both* were believers. I say therefore, he is extending the cords of his covenant love, and giving them a greater scope, to take in the children of his people and save them. This is according to the very spirit of the Gospel. It is expansive and benevolent in its character, spreading farther and wider its blessings, and giving greater support and encouragement in parental duty. And here I must add one more declaration

Romans xi. 16. of Scripture,—it is this; “If the root be holy, so are the branches.” Let us never think lightly of this connexion, which God has established, between the root and the branches, for He says it is *holy*. Let us therefore regard this connexion as God does, and treat it tenderly, as he does, not in a natural sense, merely, but in the holy sense of the Scriptures. Let us never break this holy connexion, if we would not see the branches wither and die an eternal death. God would have given us timely notice, if, in his opinion, the branches would flourish better, by being broken off from the root.

16. The Jews considered infants *proselytes*, and Christ commanded his disciples to baptize *proselytes*. He commanded them to proselyte all nations, baptizing them. And this certainly means, that the *proselytes*, at least, should be baptized.

We know that the Jews made proselytes to their religion. We read of them in Scripture. And the Jews considered *infants proselytes*, as well as their parents. The celebrated Jewish writer, Maimonides,\* says, “If an Israelite take a gentile *child*, or find a gentile *infant*, and baptize him in the name of a proselyte, behold, he is a proselyte.” According to the testimony of the Jews then, they considered infants proselytes. The apostles were Jews. And Christ commanded them to proselyte and baptize. This cannot mean anything less, than that the apostles should baptize *all the proselytes*. And as the Jews considered infants proselytes, as well as their parents, then, the apostles, who were Jews, must understand that Christ com-

\* See the testimony of others under head 19.

manded them to baptize *infants*, as well as their parents. And indeed, it really appears, that here is a plain command for infant baptism. The meaning of every command, depends on the meaning of the words, in the circumstances in which they were spoken. And did not Christ, when he gave his apostles their commission, use words as they understood them?

17. The church to which the apostles belonged, and in which they had been educated, had, for two thousand years, put the token of the covenant upon the infants of those who professed religion.

The apostles were well acquainted with the practice of their church, in putting the token of the covenant upon her children, according to the command of God. And if he did not plainly direct them to stop this practice of the church—to withhold the token from infants, and not to put it upon them any longer—if he did not thus direct the apostles, when he changed the token of the covenant, they could have no right to withhold it from infants, or to direct the church to withhold it. And the apostles had no such direction, and they gave the church no such direction, for this plain reason, it was not their duty to withhold the token of the covenant from infants—this is the case with others, it is not *their* duty. This is known, and felt, by many of the ministers of Christ, therefore, they never tell the church, that the token of the covenant should not be put upon their children, or that their infants should not be baptized.

But others, our brethren too, beloved in the Lord, tell the church, that their infants should not be baptized. We ask them why? And they answer, The token of the covenant is changed; circumcision is done away, and the character of the church is improved; that is, there are not so many unbelievers in it now, as there were before Christ came. These are poor excuses, indeed, my brethren—The *token* of the covenant is changed! There are not so many unbelievers in the church as there used to be, when the children were circumcised! I say, these are poor reasons, brethren, for withholding the token of the covenant from the children of the church.

The case is like this—A shepherd has a large, and valuable flock of sheep. He has goats, also, in his posses-

sion. He has a number of under shepherds, to take care of his flock. He suffers some of the goats to go with the sheep. He tells his shepherds what mark to put upon his flock, and they obey him. The flock multiplies, and he improves their pasture. It is clothed with a richer verdure, the dews distil more abundant and enriching, and it exhales a sweeter fragrance. Now the *chief* shepherd, tells his *under* shepherds, not to use the *old* mark any longer, and he gives them a *new* one, and commands them to put that upon the flock. They take the mark, and apply it to the sheep, and also to the goats that are with them, but do not apply it to the lambs. I observe the course they take, and ask them why they do so? and they answer; "The *mark* is changed; and there are not so many *goats* in the flock as there used to be." But these answers are nothing to the purpose. They afford no excuse for neglecting to mark the lambs. The question is; Did the chief shepherd, when he *changed* the mark, tell you not to put it upon the lambs, as you used to do? If he had, this would settle the point. But they confess he did not. I then urge the question; How came you not to mark the lambs? Is not the mark you now have, applied to the sheep, and even some of the *goats*, as the other was? Is it of any higher character than the other? Could it not be as easily, and as pleasantly applied to the lambs? But the records of their master, and the history of his flock, present no answer to these questions, which justifies the shepherds, in not marking the lambs.

Now all this is a just representation of facts, that exist, in connexion with the cause of Christ. He is the *chief* and *good* shepherd of Israel, who gave his life for the sheep. He feeds his flock like a shepherd. He gathereth the lambs in his arms, and carrieth them in his bosom. His ministers are his *under* shepherds. Those *in covenant* with him, are his flock. Some of this number, at every period, have been wicked men, such as Christ will consider *goats* in the day of judgment. He gave his ministers command to apply the mark of circumcision to those who joined his church, his flock, or entered into covenant with him. He considered the *infants* of his people in covenant with him, and called them *holy*, and *his* children, and ordered them to be marked for him, and so it

was, and so it is still. But when he improved the condition of his flock, and shed new light and joy around them, he changed the mark of circumcision, for baptism; and commanded his ministers to proselyte all nations, baptizing them. And the *new* mark, *baptism*, is of no higher character than the *other* was. *Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith*, and baptism has no *higher* character.

But if the Lord is a God to his people *now*, in a sense as high and holy as he was to Abraham and Israel—if his people are now interested in the righteousness, of faith, of which circumcision was a seal—and if God has not broken the covenant connexion between them and their children, and their children and himself, then, this covenant connexion is strong, and we have no right to break it—their right to the token, or seal, of the covenant, is good, and we have no right to withhold it from them.

Hence, it clearly appears, that it must have been very plain to the apostles, and may be very plain to us, that *baptism*, the token or seal of God's gracious and everlasting covenant, should be applied to the infants of God's believing covenanting people. This will further appear, if we consider,

18. The apostles well knew, that God had declared, that when he should multiply, and glorify his people, their children should be as *aforetime*.

Their children should be as *aforetime*, so far as God did not direct to the contrary. *Aforetime*, they were included in the covenant of God with his people, and the *token* of the covenant belonged to them, and was applied to them, by the command of God. This was a great privilege, one which the Scriptures teach us, profited much every way. The days of the Gospel, are, especially, the season in which God multiplies and glorifies his people. And as the apostles knew, that the Scriptures did not set children aside from the privileges, and token of the covenant, although the token was changed, therefore, they must also know, that, in these respects, the children should be as *aforetime*. If the apostles knew these things, it must have been very plain to them, and may be to us, that baptism, the token of the covenant, should be applied to the infants of believers in covenant with God.

But this will appear still more evident, if we consider,  
19. Baptism was in use before the days of our Saviour.

Although baptism was in use before, it was not called *Christian* baptism, till since. Just as good people existed before, but were not called *Christians* till since. That baptism was in use before the days of our Saviour, we have not only the testimony of many *human* authors, but we have the unerring testimony of the word of God.

Saint Paul, speaking by inspiration of God, plainly tells us, that the Jews had (*Diaphorais Baptismois*)\* *divers baptisms*. And the same apostle tells us  
1 Cor. x. 2. that the Israelites were all baptized,† when they  
Exod. xiv. 21, 22. passed through the sea, on dry ground. Moreover, the question put to John, by the priests and Levites whom the Jews sent to inquire who he was, shows that baptism was no *new* thing. They ask him;  
John i. 25. "Why baptizest thou then if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" It clearly appears from this question, that the priests and Levites were well acquainted with baptism. For they do not ask John, "What meanest thou by this new ceremony?"‡ But "Why baptizest *thou* then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" Baptism then was certainly in use, before the words of our text were spoken. And as our Saviour did not mention either infants, or adults, *particularly*, but used the word nations, which includes all ages, he could not be understood, by the apostles, to exclude any from baptism, who had before, been the subjects of it. But the apostles would naturally understand, that they should baptize adults *only*, or adults, and *infants also*, according to the practice of the church and nation to which they belonged, so far as Christ did not direct them to the contrary. If it were the former practice of their church and nation to *exclude* infants from baptism, *they* would, of course, exclude them from *Christian* baptism. But on the other hand, if it

\* Greek Testament, Heb. ix. 10.

† The Israelites took their *little ones* with them when they left Egypt, but whether they had any at the time of their baptism in the sea, the Scriptures do not tell us.

‡ Dr. Lathrop's Disc., page 42.

was not the practice of their church and nation to exclude infants from baptism, *they* would not do it, unless they were particularly directed to. The practice of the church and ecclesiastical body, with which they were well acquainted, and to which they belonged, would have the same influence, in determining the meaning of their commission, as the practice of the church and ecclesiastical body, to which *missionaries* belong, has, in determining the meaning of *their* commission. The apostles were missionaries. But what is this influence which a former practice has, on a commission of our missionaries to the heathen? *It determines the meaning of their commission, in regard to the PROPER SUBJECTS of baptism.*

A Baptist minister is commissioned to go and preach the Gospel to the heathen, and administer the ordinances, baptism, and the Lord's supper. And he concludes, at once, that it is according to his commission, to exclude infants from baptism. But why does he so conclude? because this was the practice of the whole religious body to which he belonged, and he knows, if they had intended any alteration in favor of baptizing infants, they would have mentioned it, *particularly*, in this commission. But as no alteration of this kind is mentioned, he firmly believes, that no such alteration was intended. Though no age, or sex, is particularly mentioned, he considers his commission directing him to baptize *adults only*, according to former practice.

But a missionary who is not a Baptist—one who has grown up amidst the practice of baptizing infants, and understands the duty, and knows it to be practised by the church, and ecclesiastical body, to which he belongs—such a missionary, when he is commissioned to go and preach the Gospel to the heathen, and administer the ordinances, baptism, and the Lord's supper, understands, that he is to baptize *infants*. Indeed, he has no doubt, that it is according to his commission to baptize them.—But why? Because it is the practice of his brethren, in that religious connexion to which he belongs.

When I was ordained as an evangelist, the charge which I received, contained this direction; "*Administer baptism and the Lord's supper to proper subjects.*" By this I understood, that I was to baptize infants. The

religious connexion to which I belong have always practised it. And when I received my commission to go forth as an evangelist, I understood that it included the duty of infant baptism, because that commission did not direct me *not* to baptize them. These were the circumstances in which I received *my* commission, and this is the manner in which I understood it. Missionaries to the heathen receive their commission, in the *same* circumstances, and understand it in the *same* manner. The apostles received their commission in *like* circumstances, and must have understood it in like manner. They were Jews, and they received their commission from a Jew. He directed them to administer baptism to proper subjects. The religious connexion to which they belonged, and in which they had been educated, applied the token of the covenant to infants. Hence, though the token was changed, they would naturally conclude, it was to be applied to infants still, if they were not told otherwise. Moreover, the religious connexion to which they belonged, and in which they had been educated, considered infants proper subjects of baptism, before it was adopted as the token of the covenant. And Christ, when he commanded them to baptize, did not tell them *not* to baptize *infants*. But as the Jews understood language, he directed his apostles *to* baptize infants. By proselytes, the Jews understood infants as well as their parents. They called infants proselytes. And Christ commanded his disciples to proselyte all nations, baptizing them. This certainly means, that the *proselytes* should be baptized. I will now prove, that the Jews *baptized* their proselytes, and exhibit further proof that they considered *infants* proselytes, and baptized *them*. On this subject, I now bring forward the following witnesses.

*Dr. Rees.* "We find it to have been the custom of the Jews solemnly to baptize, as well as to circumcise, all their proselytes. As their writers treat largely of the reasons for this rite, and give no hint of its being a novel institution, it is probable, that this had always been the custom antecedent to the time of Moses, whose account of the rite of circumcision, and of the manner of performing it, is by no means circumstantial. The Jewish writers, without one dissenting voice, allow the fact, that the

practice of Jewish baptism obtained *before* and *at* as well as *after*, our Saviour's time. There is also a strong intimation, even in the Gospel itself, of such a known practice among the Jews in the time of John the Baptist. John i. 25. The testimonies of the Jewish writers are of the greater weight, because the practice, reported by them to have been of so ancient a date, did still remain among them; for if it had not been of that antiquity to which it pretends, viz. before the time of Christ, it is not likely that it would ever have become a custom among the Jews afterwards. Would they begin to proselyte persons to their religion by baptism, in imitation of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they held accursed? And yet, if this proselyte baptism were adopted by the Jews since the time of Christ, it must have been a mere innovation in imitation of Christians, which is not very likely."\*

*Pirie.* "The *infants* of proselytes were also baptized both male and female." To prove this statement, Pirie brings forward passages from the writings of the Jews—the gemara, the Glosse, and the celebrated Jew, Maimonides. "Says the gemara; They baptize the *little* proselyte: and the Glosse adds, that the rulers of the consistory take care of it. So also Maimonides; They baptize the *infant*, or *little stranger*."† See the following also from

*Maimonides.* "In all ages whensoever any gentile was willing to enter into the covenant, and to be gathered under the wings of the Shechinah, and to undertake the yoke of the law, he was bound to have circumcision, and baptism, and a peace offering; and if it were a woman, baptism and sacrifice. Baptism was in the desert before the giving of the law. If an Israelite take a gentile child, or find a gentile infant, and baptize him in the name of a proselyte, behold, he is a proselyte."‡

*Talmud of Babylon.* (A book highly valued by the Jews.) "Any male child of a proselyte, under the age of thirteen years and a day, and any female, under the age of twelve years and a day, was baptized as an infant, at the request, and by the assent of the father, or the authority of the council."‡

\* Dr. Rees' New Cyclopædia, in article Baptism.

† Pirie's Dissertation on Baptism, pages 101, 102, 103.

‡ As quoted by Fisher and others.



*Calmet.* "The Jews require three things in a complete proselyte, baptism, circumcision, and sacrifice; but for women, only baptism and sacrifice. Baptism was never repeated, neither in the person of the parent proselyte, nor in that of his children."\*

*American Encyclopædia.* "It was the practice in the Jewish church, long before Christ's time to baptize proselytes, as a part of the ceremony of their admission."†

*Jahn.* "Proselytes were united with the great body of the Jewish people, not only by circumcision, but by baptism also. The Jews assert, that the baptism of proselytes, which has now been spoken of, is mentioned in Exodus xix. 10, 14, and xxiv. 8."‡

*Henry.* "They readily apprehended baptism to be fitly used as a sacred rite or ceremony, for the Jewish church had always used it with circumcision in the admission of proselytes, to signify the cleansing of them from the pollutions of their former state. That sign was made use of in the Christian church, that it might be the more passable. They expected it would be used in the days of the Messiah, because it was promised that then there should be a fountain opened, (Zechariah xiii. 1.) and clean water sprinkled. (Ezekiel xxxvi. 25.)"§

*Dr. Scott.* "It became customary in the Jewish church to baptize those who were proselyted to their religion from the gentiles, both male and female as well as to circumcise the males: this denoted, that they deemed them unclean in themselves, and not meet to join the congregation of the Lord, till they were washed from the filthiness of their gentile state. The prophets also often alluded to this emblem of the soul's being cleansed from sin."||

*Dr. Adam Clarke.* "The apostles knew well that the Jews not only circumcised the children of proselytes, but also baptized them. The children and even infants of proselytes, were baptized among the Jews. They were

\* Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible, in article Proselyte.

† American Encyclopædia, in article Baptism.

‡ Jahn's Biblical Archaeology, Section 325.

§ Henry's Comment. on John i. 25.

|| Comment. on Matthew iii. 6.



in consequence reputed clean, and partakers of the blessings of the covenant.”\*

*John Brown.* “If males, they were circumcised, and then baptized, and then presented their oblation to the Lord. Their females were baptized, and then they offered their oblation. No boys under thirteen years of age, or girls under twelve, were admitted without the consent of their parents, or, if these refused, without the consent of the judges of the place.”†

*Dr. William Brown.* “If the head of a family was baptized, the *infants* were baptized at the same time. It was a matter of course in the baptism of houses. The females were received by baptism and sacrifice.”‡

*Dr. Witsius.* “When a gentile became a proselyte of righteousness, three ceremonies were used, circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. But we are specially to observe, that even *little children* were baptized, generally at the same time with their parents. For thus it is said in Talmud Babylon; They baptize the *little young proselyte*. They make the first practice of this baptism to be very ancient. Some ascribe it to the patriarch Jacob, when he received into his family and domestic church the Shechemite young women, and other gentiles, who resided with him. Others derive the first testimony, or practice, of this baptism, from what is said to Moses, Exodus xix. 10; “Go unto the people, and sanctify them,” &c.§

*Dr. Prideaux.* “The Jews are remarked in our Saviour’s time to have been very sedulous to convert to their religion; and when any were thus proselyted, they were initiated by baptism, sacrifice, and circumcision.”||

*Robinson.* “According to the Rabbins, these proselytes, by means of circumcision, baptism, and an offering, obtained the rights and privileges of Jewish citizenship.”¶

*Dr. Doddridge.* “When proselytes came over to the

\* Comment. on Matthew xxviii. 19.

† Dictionary of the Bible, in article Proselyte.

‡ Antiquities of the Jews, Vol. i. pages 629, 630.

§ Economy of the Covenants, Vol. iii. pages 384, 385, 386.

|| Connexions of the Old and New Testaments, Vol. iii. page 411.

¶ Robinson’s Greek and English Lexicon.

Jewish religion, the *children* were baptized with the parents.”\*

*Dr. Lightfoot.* “You see baptism inseparably joined to the circumcision of proselytes.—They baptized, also, *young children* with their parents.”†

*Wilson, Bagwell, and Symson.* “A proselyte was made by the observation of three ceremonies, if a male; namely, circumcision, washing, and oblation; but if a female, then by two; washing and oblation.”‡

*Stackhouse.* “The custom of the Jews, in all ages, has been to receive their heathen proselytes by baptism, as well as by sacrifice and circumcision.”§

*Dr. Wall.* “Whenever gentiles were proselyted to the Jewish religion, they were initiated by circumcision, the offering of sacrifice, and baptism. They were all baptized, males and females, adults and *infants*. This was their *constant practice*, from the time of Moses to that of our Saviour, and from that period to the present day.”||

I know that proselyte baptism, like other facts has been disbelieved and opposed. It lays directly against the belief of those who reject infant baptism, and they oppose it. Robinson, the baptist, tells us, in his history of baptism, that “the learned and laborious Dr. Benson,” once believed in the existence of proselyte baptism. “But on further examination, he saw reason to doubt that fact, and like a generous investigator of truth, as he was, he proposed his difficulties with a view to excite a further inquiry.” And while he is doubting the fact, and would excite further inquiry, it is highly proper that I should present him as another witness on our side of the question; not because he doubts the truth of it, but because he says, “that he could not answer all that Dr. Wall and Mr. Emlyn had said, in support of proselyte baptism.”¶ This is confessed by Robinson, while he is so opposed

\* Lectures, Proposition 154, sect. 1.

† In Lightfoot’s *Horæ Hebraicæ* on Matthew iii. and xxviii.

‡ Dictionary of the Bible, compiled by Wilson, Bagwell, and Symson, in article Proselyte.

§ History of the Bible, vol. v., page 286.

|| History of Infant Baptism. Introduction, vol. i.

¶ Robinson’s History, page 43.

to our belief on the subject of baptism, that, to help himself, he plainly contradicts the word of God, by saying ; "There never was any such ceremony as baptism in practice before the time of John.—Neither was there ever such a rite as Jewish baptism."\* The word of God tells us that the Jews were baptized, and that they had divers baptisms, as the Greek Testament reads. This is the contradiction of which I speak. However, I believe that Mr. Robinson sometimes tells the truth, and no one, that is at all acquainted with him, will even suspect him of telling any thing more than what is true, in favor of our sentiments. And I am willing to believe him, when he gives the character of Dr. Benson, by calling him, "a generous investigator of truth—this most excellent critic—the learned and laborious Dr. Benson." But it is worthy of particular notice, that notwithstanding the Doctor's learning and labor, and generous investigation, and most excellent criticism, he confessed that he could not answer all that Dr. Wall and Mr. Emlyn had said in support of proselyte baptism. His testimony, then, is of great weight in our favor. Mr. Robinson also furnishes us with the testimony of Reiskius, whom he calls, "a learned foreigner."

1 Cor.  
x. 1, 2.  
Heb.  
ix. 10.

Reiskius says, Jewish baptism is a solemn rite, in which proselytes of both sexes, in the presence of three creditable witnesses are dipped in water, that being legally cleansed and regenerated they may enter on the profession of a new religion.† But this definition, says Mr. Robinson, is not true. Let us then hear the testimony of

*Mr. Robinson.* "If a Jew bought a pagan minor, or if one were taken in war, it was determined by the wise men, he should dip himself as a proselyte of righteousness.—The mode was immersion.—The proselyte was not to jump in as if he were bathing, but he was to walk in leisurely. A woman was to be conducted by three women, and when notice was given that she was up to the neck in the water, the three judges either withdrawing or turning their backs, she plunged herself once into the water."‡ This is the way Mr. Robinson takes to get off,

\* Robinson's History, page 36, 46.

† Ibid, page 46.

‡ Ibid, page 46.

and avoid the pressure of the argument in favor of proselyte baptism—the pagan minors and others plunge themselves, he says. But he does not tell us how every pagan minor *could* plunge himself, or whether every one that *could* had courage to do it. And I feel a little interest to know, how the *infant* could plunge himself; for many of the minors were infants.

It may be said that some learned men have doubted the existence of proselyte baptism. But the doubts of learned men are not so weighty, as to put down all the *positive evidence* of their *equally* learned brethren. Indeed, if we only give scope to these doubts, they will destroy themselves. For the practice of proselyte baptism would not have been mentioned, as a fact, as it is acknowledged to be, in the Jewish writings, unless it were so. For every Jew would know that it was a falsehood. Those, therefore, who doubt its existence *before* the time of Christ, must suppose that it was introduced at some period *since*. But at every period since, Christ, and Christians, and Christian ordinances, have been held in utter contempt, by the unbelieving Jews. Nothing then is more unlikely, from the very nature of the case, than that the Jews, with all their contemptuous feelings towards Christ, and his people, and his ordinances, should take a Christian ordinance, and acknowledge it as theirs, and imitate Christians in attending to it. Their aversion, to such a course, would be as great as to death itself. Yea, we may believe that they would sooner die than do it, for the history of their character justifies us in this belief. The Jews, generally, have not believed in Christ, as the true Messiah; but have regarded him as an impostor, and held him accursed.

As to the silence of certain Jewish writers, on the subject of proselyte baptism, it is not at all strange. For as the practice was common, and neither doubted nor opposed by any one, there was but little more occasion for mentioning it, in their writings, generally, than for mentioning the practice of eating and drinking. "For almost two thousand years, from Abraham to John Baptist, we have not one instance of the circumcision of an infant on the eighth day. 'Will it therefore follow, that no infants were circumcised, or none on the eighth day, all that time? There is no in-

stance of baptism in the churches of Antioch, Iconium, Rome, or Thessalonica.' Were none of their numbers baptized? It is not common for historians to give particular instances of that which is altogether common?"\* When persons were proselyted to the Jewish religion, it was implied, as a matter of course, that they were baptized, parents and children, according to the usual custom. This is a sufficient reason why Josephus should not mention proselyte baptism, particularly in his account of the proselyting of the Idumeans by Hyrcanus.

Where proselyte baptism is particularly mentioned, in the Jewish writings, there is most reason for it. It is mentioned among certain laws, and institutions, which were in common use, which the Jews felt themselves bound to observe; which had come down, and been perpetuated, from generation to generation, by tradition, aided by the living power of practice, and which were put to writing, because the Jews became more and more scattered, and broken, and the number of their wise men less, so that they were in greater danger of losing something of the valuable instruction.

And it should be remembered, particularly, that the idea of proselyte baptism agrees with the well known fact, that the Jews, as they were taught, considered all persons unclean, who were not in covenant with God. Baptism has been chosen, and used of God, to express the necessity of ceremonial, and also of spiritual cleansing, and the method of their accomplishment. The Jews had "*divers baptisms*," for themselves, and for others also. And they were, in a wonderful manner, baptized by God himself, on a special occasion of entering anew into covenant with him; and therefore it would be natural, and reasonable for them to understand, as they say they did, that the duty of proselyte baptism was implied and taught, in their scriptures. And we can see, in view of all that has been said, that there is evidence enough to satisfy any man, that the Jews *did* practise proselyte baptism, even the baptism of parents and their *infants*. And even Mr. Judson has acknowledged, that the argument has some force, in favor of the application of *Christian*

\* Brown's Divinity, page 539.

baptism to infants. His words are these. "This argument would have some force, were there any sufficient evidence, that the Jews, in the time of Christ, or in any preceding age, admitted proselytes by baptism. But of this, no evidence has been produced." He further says, "on the supposition, that the command of Christ to teach did not limit his subsequent command to such as were taught, it is doubtless fair reasoning, that, when Christ, in general terms, commanded his apostles to baptize, he must have intended, and they must have understood him to intend, that kind of baptism to which they had been accustomed. So far," says Mr. Judson, "the argument is good."\* I will therefore close this head in the words of Dr. Doddridge; "Now, as when proselytes came over to the Jewish religion, the children were baptized with the parents, the apostles would naturally conclude, that children were included in the general commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."†

20. Infants *were* proselyted to Christ, in the age of the apostles.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the apostolic age, says; "Several persons among us, some sixty and some seventy years old, were made proselytes to Christ in their infancy"—were made *proselytes*, &c.‡ Here Justin uses the same Greek word that is used in the commission Christ gave his apostles, *proselyte all nations*, baptizing them. And the apostles were doubtless obedient to the commission of their Lord, and baptized the proselytes. And according to the testimony of the holy martyr, Justin, infants were made proselytes to Christ, in the apostolic age. He uses the same Greek word to designate their *age*, when proselyted, that is applied to the infants, who were brought to Christ, and taken in his arms, and blessed.§

\* Judson's Sermon, page 32.

† Lectures, Proposition 154.

‡ Dr. Wilson, in Ridgley's Body of Divinity, vol. 4, page 209.

§ Dr. Woods' Lectures, page 107.

21. It is evident, from the silence of the Jews, that the apostles did not teach them that the covenant connexion between them and their children, was broken and done away.

When circumcision was set aside, its abolition had respect equally to persons of every age. But the Jews were unwilling to relinquish it, though no more so, in the case of their children, than in that of the gen- Acts  
tile converts, who enjoyed another token of xv. 7.  
their covenant relation. This relation, after the time of our Saviour, as much as ever, was marked with a religious rite, though the rite was different. Circumcision was set aside, and baptism was used. With this in view, would the Jews have been silent, if their own children had been denied the religious rite, marking the covenant relation of the gentile converts? Especially, would they who contended even for the *token* of the covenant relation, be silent, if they were taught that the covenant relation *itself* was broken? But the whole multitude of the Jews *were* silent, and made no complaint about the covenant relation of their children, when it was publicly decided, and declared, by the apostles and elders, that circumcision was not to be practised. And they remained so. Though they highly valued the relation, yet no complaint, that it was dissolved, is heard, at any time, from any one of all the thousands of the Jews. This fact shows, that the Jews were not taught, that their children were no longer connected with them in holy covenant. For silence, from them, in such a case, would be contrary to their known constitution, and habits of thinking, feeling, and acting; and also contrary to the very nature of the case, and the views which the scriptures inculcated, and the Jews entertained. They were of an unyielding, sanguine, violent temperament. Hence, had the apostles taught them that the covenant relation, which had so long existed, and was so dear to them, was broken, they would not have been silent. In such a case, we might as justly expect that they would complain, as that the forests will wave, and the leaves rustle in a hurricane; or that the sea will roar, and the waves beat in a tempest. The connexion between cause and effect, is the same in both cases. The only just conclusion then, is, that the Jews were not



taught, that the covenant connexion between them and their children was dissolved. And this explains the reason why the change of the token, respecting their children, affected the Jews no more unpleasantly, than respecting the gentile converts. But it was no more necessary in one case, than the other, to mention, particularly, that baptism took the place of circumcision. For as the covenant connexion of the gentile converts was now marked with a religious rite, though different, so would the Jews at once conclude, that the covenant connexion of their children would also be marked with a religious rite, though different.

22. Baptism accords better with the state of infancy than circumcision, and certainly may profit infants as much.

They are not capable of understanding *either*, at the time of their infancy, any better than they can understand many other things that are done for them ; neither was it the design of God that they should. But they are more capable of baptism, because it is not a painful rite, but is perfectly pleasant and easy of application. Each rite has met with this objection ; What good will it do ? or, in other words ; What profit is there in it ? And the answer is ; “ Much every way.” This is the answer

Rom. Saint Paul gave to the objection, “ What profit is there of circumcision ?” And the same answer may be given to the same objection against baptism. Infant baptism may accord as well with God’s benevolent\* design in covenanting with infants, as ever circumcision did. Infant baptism occupies such a place in the Christian system, that, in its connexions, and consequences, it takes fast hold on eternity, and the salvation of souls. But there are persons who know and care but little, about this interesting subject ; and they realize but little of its benefits. There are others, whose only care concerning it is, to object and oppose ; and if they should realize *nothing* of its benefits, it would not be strange, neither would it be any valid objection against infant baptism. The objection might as well be brought against the Gospel of Christ.

\* See God’s design in covenanting with infants, illustrated under head 13.

23. The *continuance* of the established religious connexion between parents and children, is taught, in the following passages. "I have been young and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor *his seed* begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and *his seed* is blessed. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord;—*His seed* shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. The just man walketh in his integrity; *his children* are blessed after him. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon *thy seed*, and my blessing upon *thine offspring*: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the *seed* of the blessed of the Lord, and *their offspring with them*. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of *their children* after them. They shall live with *their children*. He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." The existence of this religious connexion, between parents and children, was the reason why the token of it was applied to them, from Abraham to Christ and the same reason exists now, good, and strong as ever.

24. The religious connexion, or covenant relation, is *continued*, according to these passages, also—"Else were your children unclean; but *now are they holy*. They are beloved for the *fathers'* sakes. If the *root* be holy, so are the *branches*. If the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall turn to you again. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, *forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham*;" that is a son of Abraham by faith—a believer, therefore, salva-

Psalms  
xxxvii.  
25, 26.

cxii. 1, 2.

Prov.  
xx. 7.

Isaiah  
xlv. 3, 4, 5.

Isaiah  
lxv. 23.

Jeremiah  
xxxii. 39.

Zech.  
x. 9.

Malachi  
iv. 6.

1 Cor.  
vii. 14.  
Rom.  
xi. 28.  
ver. 16.  
Luke x. 6.  
xix. 9.

tion came to his house or family. Here the religious connexion, between believers and their families, is clearly brought to view, as continued and blessed, because in this way, Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. "For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

25. The duty, and privilege, of bringing children to Christ, publicly, for his blessing and a token of his favor, is plainly taught,—in Matthew 19th, Mark 10th, and Luke 18th.

There we are told that infants were brought to Christ, that he should put his hands on them and pray, and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

I do not mean to intimate that Christ baptized these infants, for he did not baptize any one himself, and *Christian* baptism, at this time was not instituted,—this may be the only reason why the infants were not baptized, if they *were* not. But Christ's treatment of these infants, is full of tenderness and instruction—and the instruction is for us, and the tenderness for our imitation. It is as applicable to us, as other parts of the New Testament are. Christ gave the infants a most expressive token of his favor, and asserted their connexion with his church, which is his kingdom on earth. The token he gave them, was the usual sign of conveying the Spirit, or spiritual blessings ; and by his use of it, he shows us, that such a token is proper for infants, and that they are the proper subjects of spiritual blessings ; and enforces the duty, and privilege, of bringing them to him publicly, for his blessing, and a token of his favor. But how shall the duty of bringing them to Christ, publicly, be performed ? In what way ? How can they be brought to him, since he has left the world ? And how can his disciples forbid them to come ? Christ is present on earth, though he does not here tabernacle in the flesh, as he once did : and children may be brought to him *now*, as well as ever. In his churches, with his ministers, and people, he is specially present, according to his word. And *there* is administered an established token of his

Matthew  
xviii. 20.  
xxviii. 20.  
Psalm  
lxxxvii. 2.

favor, which is *baptism*. *There too*, believers bring their children, for his blessing, and the token of his favor, and are not disappointed. But in what other way can children be publicly brought to Christ, according to the duty enforced? In what other way have his disciples suffered them to come, or forbidden them? And in what other way was there any danger that children would be forbidden to come to Christ? Surely not in a *private* way, giving them up in the *heart*. For in this way, the disciples of Christ *could not*, and *would not* forbid children to come to him; and there was no danger of their doing it. And the words of Christ are not applied to such a case, in which there was no need of them. But his words were *needed*. For believers, ever since his day, have felt it to be a duty, and a privilege, to dedicate their infants to him, publicly, *in baptism*. But in this, they have been sometimes opposed by *disciples*, and even *ministers* of Christ. But this is the only way in which the words of Christ are *now* applicable, or ever have been since his time. If we confine his words to people in his time, we may as well confine a great part, if not all, of the New Testament, in the same manner; and consider it not applicable to others. But Christ speaks to us, as well as to others, when he says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Observe the reason why they should be suffered to come, and not forbidden—it is this; "For *of such* is the kingdom of heaven"—that is, they are still in covenant with God, and connected with his church, as much as ever. This is their right, and privilege, which they long enjoyed, and which Christ, when he came, did not take from them, but *continued* and *blessed*, and, therefore, it is theirs still—theirs is the privilege of a connexion with the church, in covenant, which is rich with blessings—theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And the *church* is the kingdom of heaven, as the kingdom of Christ, on earth. And if the infants of believers are still connected with the church or kingdom of Christ, in covenant—if "*of such is the kingdom of heaven*," this is a good reason why they should be suffered to come to him, and receive the established *token* of such a connexion; for it is the King's mark,

and belongs to those of his kingdom. They have therefore a right to it, which Christ has not denied, but acknowledged, and established.

Some however suppose, that Christ, when he says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven ; means, suffer them to come, because others, *like* them, are of the kingdom of heaven. But what reason would this be, why *they* should come, because *others*, like them, are of the kingdom of heaven ? This reason would be as strong in favor of bringing *lambs* and *doves* to Christ ; for Christians, are *like* them. Christ never reasoned at this rate. But the privileges, and blessings, of a religious, covenant connexion, with the church, or kingdom of God, belongs to the infants of believers. This connexion is now marked with the rite of baptism—the King's mark—the mark of those of his kingdom.

26. Infant baptism would have been a plain duty, if Christ and the apostles had said less than they have, in relation to this subject.

What one apostle has said, in the fourth chapter of Romans, and the third of Galatians, taken in connexion with the Old Testament, is enough to show, that infant baptism is a plain duty. For in these chapters, we are informed of the continuance of the covenant which God made with Abraham, and sealed with the sign of circumcision,—we are here taught, that, as Abraham believed in God, and it was counted unto *him* for righteousness, so the faith of all other believers, is counted to *them* for righteousness,—that Abraham was constituted the father of all them that believe, and they are his spiritual children, and blessed with him, according to God's covenant of promise, "To be a God unto him and to his seed." And all such, are brought into that covenant relation to God, in which Abraham stood, so that he is their God, as well as the God of Abraham. This shows that infant baptism is a duty. For the token of Abraham's covenant relation to God, was applied to his infants ; and those who are in the same covenant relation, should apply the token of it to *their* infants, unless God has told them not to do it. For the continuance of the same covenant relation, implies the same duty, in applying the

token of that relation. And if the token is changed, and is not confined to those who stand in the covenant relation of Abraham—if it is not forbidden to their infants, they have no right to withhold it from them. And God has not forbidden that the token of his covenant should be applied to the children of believers. But on the contrary, all the passages of Scripture, which teach the continuance of the gracious covenant established with Abraham and his seed; and all the passages, which teach the continuance of the religious connexion between believers and their children—all such passages imply the duty of infant baptism.

But what if Christ, and the apostles, had been entirely *silent* upon this subject? Would *silence* have *broken* the long established religious covenant connexion, between believers and their children? No; verily. Silence would have left the connexion good, and strong, and its token with it, in full possession of all the authority of God. Infant baptism then, would have been a plain duty, if Christ, and the apostles had said less than they have, relating to this subject.

27. The thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter of Acts, furnishes an argument in favor of infant baptism; "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

What promise? Not the promise of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, spoken of by the prophet Joel, and just fulfilled. This promise did not extend to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord should call. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were confined to the age of the apostles, and were not experienced by Christians afterwards. Besides, when Peter said, the promise is to you, and your children, and to all that are afar off, this was a part of his answer to the question, Men and brethren, what shall we do? But they might have had the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and yet be lost; whereas, they inquired, what they should do to be saved. Then said Peter, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here the duties of repentance and baptism, are enforced, in these

words; "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." But what promise is meant? A certain promise, that was suited to their inquiry, and the state of their minds, when they were anxious to know what they should do to be saved—A promise, that was so well known and understood, that it need only be called, *the promise*—A promise, that runs to parents, and to their children—to those who were called on the day of Pentecost, and to their children, and extended in like manner to those who were afar off, when they should be called.

It is plain, that the promise must be one that was well known by the Jews—one that was frequently mentioned, and clearly brought to view in the scriptures. This is evident from the fact, that Peter thought he need only say, *the promise*, and he should be well understood, without being more particular. But what promise is thus spoken of, by way of eminence, in the scriptures? What promise was so familiar to the Jews? So frequently mentioned, and clearly brought to view in the scriptures, as to be known, at once, by the name, the promise? There is but one in the Bible, that has all these marks. It is the great promise of the covenant which God established with Abraham and his seed. This promise is distinguished by all the marks which I have named. It was suited to the inquiry of the anxious multitude, and to the state of their minds, when they inquired what they should do to be saved? For the sanctifying, and comforting influences of the Spirit, and all things needful, were contained in the great promise of the covenant, which God established with Abraham. It was also well known and understood, by the name, *the promise*; for it is frequently so called in scripture. This promise, also runs to parents, and to their children—to those who were called on the day of Pentecost, and to their children, and extended in like manner to those who were afar off, when they should be called.

Moreover, when the covenant of promise was established with Abraham and his seed, for an everlasting covenant, and sealed with circumcision, this was the reason why circumcision, the seal or token of the covenant, was applied to him, and to his children, and to others in

like manner, when it was extended to them. By the same reason, Peter urges the duty of baptism. "Be baptized,"—he says—"For *the promise* is unto you and your children, &c. The same reason is here presented for applying the *new* token, which was the reason for applying the *old* one—the same reason for *baptism*, which had always been the reason for *circumcision*.

The reason here urged in favor of baptism, is this; "The promise is to you and to your children." This reason holds equally good with respect to all to whom the promise is made. It is made to you and to your children. It is therefore as good a reason for baptizing the children, as the parents, whatever promise is intended. Some, however, suppose that not their infant offspring, but their adult posterity is meant, by children. But Peter makes a distinction between adults and children. He says to the adults, capable of understanding him, "The promise is to *you*." This he says to the adult *offspring*, as well as others; he adds, the promise *is* to your children. It is to them *now*. This is very different from saying, it *shall be* to them, when they are grown to years of discretion, and become penitent. Besides, what reason for mentioning the children in this manner, if they had no connexion with their parents, with respect to the promise? But there is the most evident propriety in this, if they were still connected with their parents in covenant, as they had been for thousands of years before.

28. The baptism of the household of Lydia, is an *unquestionable example*, for baptizing families, *on account of the faith of the heads of the families*.

By an unquestionable example, I do not mean one that was never doubted, for there is no truth in the Bible but what has been doubted. But I mean, an example supported by clear evidence. I am not at all anxious to know, whether Lydia had any infants, or not: for if others, under her care, were baptized, on account of *her* faith; the infants of believers may as well be baptized, on account of their *parents'* faith. And the evidence is clear and strong, that all the household of Lydia were not believers, and baptized on their own faith.

The word *household* is used not less than fifty-six times in scripture, and it is uniformly used in the sense in



which we use the word *family*. The word *household* then, includes young children, as much as the word *family*. And there are, probably, three families that have young children in them, to one that has none; so that from this circumstance, there is three times as much probability, that there *were* young children in Lydia's household, as that there were *not*.

The *baptism* of her household is mentioned, but if they had *believed* also, their faith would have been so much more important and interesting, in itself, that the inspired writer would have been much more likely to mention their *faith* than their *baptism*.

It is particularly mentioned, that Lydia heard the apostles, and that the Lord opened her heart; but if her household *also* had all heard and embraced the gospel at the same time, and under the influence of the same discourse, this would have been a very *wonderful* and *uncommon* event, such as I have never met with in any history. And how much more likely would the apostles have been to mention it? Can we tell? Yes—just as much more likely, as the conversion of a *whole family*, at the *same time* and *place*, is more uncommon and interesting, than the conversion of one individual.

The conversion of a whole family at the same time and place would have been a *distinguished monument*—an *everlasting memorial*, to the praise and glory of God, displaying the saving power of his word and spirit to all who should afterwards read the Bible, from generation to generation, down to the end of time. So that its importance in this respect would have *demande*d, that such a remarkable conversion should be mentioned. And as great a demand for it would have been made upon the apostles, by their own devotional feelings. Yea, their love to God and man, and their zeal for the promotion of the cause of Christ, would have constrained them to mention such a remarkable conversion; so well calculated to honor Christ, and promote his cause. For it would, doubtless, have been the means of awakening and saving many.

If the whole family of Lydia had been converted, the *wisdom* and *honesty* of the apostles would have led them to mention it. What *wise* and *honest* man, in giving an account of the conversion of a certain person, and her

*whole family*, ever gave so poor an account, as to mention only the conversion of *one individual*? A man's wisdom and honesty would both be questioned in such a case, and with justice too. But the apostles were wise, and honest, and pious men. And their wisdom, and honesty, as well as their piety, would certainly have led them to mention what could have been done so easily, and was so remarkable and interesting in itself, and so important to the cause of Christ, and the salvation of men.

The fact, that Lydia became a Christian, is the *only* reason that is given, *why* she and her household were baptized. But if all her family were believers, *their* faith was as good a reason for *their* baptism, as *her* faith for *her* baptism.

If the household of Lydia were *converted*, and *this* was the reason of their baptism, the account which is given in scripture, is directly calculated to lead us into error—to lead us to mistake the truth. An account better calculated to give us a wrong impression, could not well be made out. This is clearly to be seen, on a moment's consideration. Let any minister, with whose principles we were unacquainted, give us such an account—let him mention that in such a place, a certain woman heard him preach, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken: “And when Acts xvi. she was baptized, and her household, she be- 14, 15. sought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there: and she constrained us.” What impression should we receive from such an account? If we believe it an *honest* account, we should firmly believe, at once, that the woman, whose conversion was mentioned, was the only believer in the family. We should have no doubt of this. We should not even suspect that we could misunderstand his account. And if he wished to give us a wrong impression, and have us mistake the truth, his account would be a most artful contrivance for the purpose. But the scriptures were not *designed*, nor *contrived*, to lead us into error. We may therefore confidently believe—yea we *ought* to believe, that Lydia was the *only* believer, and that her household were baptized on account of her faith.

The argument used by Lydia to persuade the apostles to come into her house, shows that her household were not believers. She says; "If ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into *my* house, and abide there." But if *all her family* had been believers, how much more *natural*, and *weighty*, would have been the argument; "If ye have judged *us* to be faithful unto the Lord, come into *our* house and abide there!" Indeed, this argument would have been so much more *modest* and *interesting*, as well as natural and weighty; that she would not have failed to use it, if all her household had been believers. Moreover, such a believing family would have been very anxious for the company of the apostles, and if they had said little or nothing, the fact that they were all believers, would have exerted a powerful influence, in constraining the apostles to come into the house. But *Lydia* did the work of constraining them, without any argument drawn from the faithfulness of her *family*. Her *own* faithfulness was the argument. If ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into *my* house, —and *she* constrained us, says the apostle.

But it is said, that when Paul and Silas went out of the prison, they entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the *brethren*, they comforted them, and departed. Paul and Silas then, when they left the prison, found *brethren* in the house of Lydia. Does not this prove that the household of Lydia, which was baptized, were believers? Some think it does: but it certainly does not; for we know of brethren, who were not of the household of Lydia, that would be very likely to be at her house. I speak of *Luke*, Paul's "fellow laborer," 24 verse. and of *Timotheus*, whom Paul took with him to Philippi. Luke, the writer of the history, speaks of himself as one of those who went to Philippi, and were there certain days, and went to the river's side, and spake unto the women who were there assembled. *We* did these things, says Luke. Speaking of Lydia, he says, she besought *us*, and she constrained *us*. Luke then was one of those, who were besought and constrained to go into the house of Lydia, and abide there, before Paul and Silas were imprisoned. And, at the beginning of the same chapter that gives this account, we are told that Paul

took Timotheus with him. Here then are *brethren* Luke and Timotheus, who were doubtless anxious about Paul and Silas, and needed to be comforted, and *were*, no doubt, when Paul and Silas left the prison. And on the next day after Paul and Silas were imprisoned, the house of Lydia would be the most likely place to find Luke and Timotheus, anxious for their brethren, and comforted and joyous on account of their deliverance.

Besides, if there were any other Christian brethren in the city of Philippi, they, also, must have been anxious for Paul and Silas, who were suffering by scourging and imprisonment, and glad to meet Luke and Timotheus, at the house of Lydia, and comforted by the deliverance of Paul and Silas from prison, and their parting address, on leaving the place. Moreover, there were no males in the assembly, when Lydia heard the apostles, and was converted. They went out "and spake unto the *women*," &c.

The argument then, drawn from the baptism of Lydia and her household, in favor of baptizing the children of believers is not at all embarrassed by the fact, that the apostles found brethren at her house, when they left the prison.

29. The baptism of the jailer and his family affords an argument in favor of infant baptism. "He rejoiced believing in God with all his house." Pond, in his answer to Judson, says; "If there is any ambiguity in this English phrase, there is none in the original. It is there positively determined, and Mr. J. knows it, that the faith and joy which are here expressed, can refer to the *jailer only*."\* "But he was baptized and all his, <sup>Acts</sup> straightway." "We learn, in the original Greek, <sup>xvi. 33.</sup> that not one in his house believed but himself. The following is an exact translation; 'And he rejoiced in all his house, he having believed in God.' The Greek participle for believing is in the singular number;—'*he* having believed.' Whereas, had one in his house believed beside himself, the participle must have been in the plural. The adverb, *pannoiki*, in *all his house*, stands with, and qualifies the verb rejoiced. Thus it is evident his house or children were baptized on *his* faith."†

\* Pond's Treatise, page 87.

† Smith's Lecture, page 38.

"But," (as Moore, in his reply to Chapin, says,) "if the jailer rejoiced and believed with all his house, it does not follow that they rejoiced and believed with him. But a short time ago, Mr. C. believed, *with* the people of his charge, that immersion of believers was the only Christian baptism. But they did not believe the same *with* him. He rejoiced *with* them at the new light which was poured in upon his mind. But they *wept with* him."\*

We can see very good reason why the jailer should rejoice in his connexion with his family, for the connexion was such that the apostles could say, "Believe <sup>Acts</sup> on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be <sup>xvi. 31.</sup> saved, and thy house." And the same precious connexion, between the faith of the parent and the salvation of the children, was brought to view by Christ, when he said that salvation came to the family of Zaccheus because of his faith. "This day is salvation come to this house,

<sup>Luke</sup> forasmuch as *he* also is a son of Abraham. For <sup>xix. 9, 10.</sup> the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." It appears that the apostles brought to view, and probably further explained, to the jailer, the gracious connexion between believers and their children—a connexion eminently favorable to their salvation.

30. In every instance, recorded in scripture, in which the head of a family was baptized at home, his *household* was baptized also.

And it is worthy of particular notice, that in the ten instances in which Christian baptism is mentioned, in the New Testament, there are *three* households. But among all the hundreds and thousands of instances, in which baptism has been administered by our Baptist brethren, I have found only one in which the head of a family, and the household, were baptized. And in this case, it does not appear whether they were all baptized at the same time, or not.

31. Household dedication corresponds to the best feelings of the believer, and increases the ardor of these feelings.

It is when the Christian is nearest to God in prayer, that he feels the most like dedicating his household to

\* Moore's Reply, page 50.

him. And while he reflects upon his responsible connexion with his family, it is most encouraging and grateful to his feelings to know, that the connexion is such, that Christ could say; "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of <sup>Luke</sup> Abraham: for the Son of man is come to seek <sup>xix. 9, 10.</sup> and to save that which was lost." Believing in God, he rejoices in view of this gracious connexion with his family. And this view of the subject increases the ardor of his devotional feelings.

32. If children, after Christ came, had been set aside from that relation to his covenant, and church, which they had long enjoyed, parents would not have been so highly favored, respecting their infant offspring, as they used to be.

But thus to *contract* their privileges, would have been contrary to the very character, and spirit, of the gospel of Christ. And if his coming had produced this effect, how different it would have been from what parents might expect, from reading where it is written; "Their <sup>Jer.</sup> children also shall be as *aforetime*." "He shall <sup>xxx. 20.</sup> feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather <sup>Isai.</sup> the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his <sup>xl. 11.</sup> bosom." And if Christ had set children aside from the former privilege of their connexion with his church or kingdom, how different would this have been from any thing that he did! Especially, how different would it have been from his conduct when he said; "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Besides, it would be plainly inconsistent, to contract the privileges of believing parents respecting their infant seed, when their *own* privileges were enlarged, and as much required of them, respecting their children, as ever.

33. No ancient writer charges infant baptism with being a *new doctrine*, and *contrary to the practice of the church*. I mean, this has not been done by any writer who lived near the time of the apostles.

I know it is done by writers who lived ten, or fifteen hundred years after the apostles. Many, at this distance, as well as at the present time, can very easily

contradict those, who lived near the apostles, and must have known their practice, and also the practice of the churches they planted. But if the churches, planted by the apostles, were near as zealous, and faithful, and as much concerned for apostolic purity of doctrine and practice, as our Baptist brethren; infant baptism could not have been introduced, without such a violent struggle as would have rent the church asunder. This is plain to be seen and understood. Many and loud voices would have been heard, proclaiming that the doctrine was *new*, and *contrary to the practice of the apostles*, and the *whole church*. In such a case, Tertullian would not have been left to stand alone, and oppose the practice of infant baptism by his own opinion only, without pretending that it was unlawful. He *could*, and *would* have summoned to his aid the opinion and practice of the apostles, and the whole church; and shown that God was with him, in his opposition to infant baptism. It was practised, as our Baptist brethren acknowledge, within one hundred years after the apostolic age; that is, in the latter part of the second century. The first century, I call the apostolic age; for St. John, one of the apostles, lived to be one hundred years old.

Mr. Judson says, that the practice of infant baptism, "no doubt, commenced in the latter part of the second century."\* He calls it, "the most pernicious practice that ever infested and laid waste the vineyard of the Lord."† Now it was impossible, that the churches planted by the apostles should suffer such a practice to be introduced, without powerful opposition.

#### 34. Infant baptism has a *saving influence*.

The Christian, and indeed every man, finds it easier to live loosely, and to suffer others under his care to live so, in proportion as his resolutions and engagements against it are *few* and *secret*. Those which are made in secret impose some restraint upon the conscience, and so far regulate the life. But their influence is much greater, when they are made public. Then, every departure from them is noted, and disapproved, and falls under public censure, and is injurious to the cause espoused. For

\* Sermon, page 35.

† Ibid. page 31. .

make the worst of our world, it does not approve of inconsistencies, especially in the Christian. This is well known, understood and felt. It is the reason why every judicious man is careful to promise no more than he can well expect to fulfil ; and the reason why some Christians are so backward to make a public profession of religion.

But when the Christian devotes himself to God publicly, this act will have a *great* influence, upon all his after life—upon his thoughts, his words, and actions ; and, consequently, promote the glory of God, and the salvation of men. *The very act of devoting himself to God in public*—an act witnessed by heaven, and earth, has a mighty influence in binding him to the service of the Lord, in awakening his piety, and urging him forward to deny himself, and crucify unholy affections, and bring the whole man, body and soul, into subjection to the obedience of Christ. And this influence is a *saving influence*. Many are saved by it. So it is with parents respecting the dedication of *their children*, as well as themselves. The influence, in both cases, is a saving influence ; and many are saved by it. Prayer and Christian exhortation, instruction and restraint ; or, in a word, *parental Christian faithfulness*, has a saving influence. And infant baptism—a public dedication of children to God, has a saving influence, by holding the Christian to all his parental duties, with a deeper, and more persevering, and prayerful interest. He has publicly vowed to the Lord respecting his children, in particular, and he cannot go back—he must not shrink from the faithful discharge of parental duty. And in proportion to his piety and understanding of the vow that he has made, he will be faithful, and the *more so*, on account of the public dedication of his children to God. Thus, infant baptism has a saving influence, and is vastly important. And by means of it, I have no doubt, that many will be saved from everlasting wailings in outer darkness, and with the great multitude of the redeemed, forever shout hosanna to the Son of David. And in proportion as infant baptism, and the *duties it implies*, and *enforces*, are better understood, and performed, it will be, what I verily believe God designed it to be, *a powerful means of raising up a godly*



*seed; of urging forward the Millennium; and of great glory to his name forever.*

It may be said, that infant baptism does not always accomplish such great and happy effects; I answer, neither does the gospel of Christ. This too, is misunderstood, neglected, and abused; and in many cases, its *saving influence* is not realized.

35. It is *reasonable*, that infants should be publicly devoted to God.

Such a devotion of children to God is reasonable, in many respects. But here, my meaning is that it is reasonable, because it is a just acknowledgement of many important truths, and because it brings these truths to bear upon the heart, and conscience, and life, in a manner which otherwise, they would not.

The *right*, which God has to man and his services, he has clearly revealed in his word and providence. This *right* should be acknowledged. But who will do it? The enemies of God will not. But his friends do it, when they publicly devote themselves and children to him. Is not this reasonable? Should they not acknowledge God's right to the children he has lent them? Or should they, in this respect, do as his enemies; and their children be as the children of the heathen? Must they act the *Christian* in private, but the *heathen* in public?

God asserts a *special right* to the children of those who are in covenant with him. This *special right*, which God asserts, should also be acknowledged. It is reasonable to do this?

God has not only put a difference between the infants of those in covenant with him, and others, by speaking of such infants as his children, in covenant, but by *blessing them in this connexion*. This difference, which God has made in the bestowment of his blessings, is an important truth, to be remembered with gratitude. And should it not be acknowledged? Is it not reasonable?

The *special obligation of Christians* to train up their children for God—to do all they can, as his agents, to secure for him his right in their children—this is a truth; and is it not reasonable to acknowledge it?

Real Christians feel a *special interest* for the spiritual good of their children, and a public expression of it, sup-

ported by correspondent life, does good to others. Is it not reasonable, then, that such a public expression should be given?

The *special encouragement*, which God has given his people respecting their children, is a truth, which should be devoutly embraced, and acknowledged.

These truths, which God has made public, should be publicly acknowledged. And it ought to be expected that Christians will do it. Who will do it, if they do not? But what if they do it in *secret* merely? Who knows it? To keep back the acknowledgement of such truths, is to withhold from God his due.

Is it not reasonable, that the dedication of children should *take such a form*, as to awaken the most prayerful interest, and urge, most powerfully, to fidelity in every parental duty? But the dedication of children to God in baptism is the *only public act*, by which the devout Christian can express the interest that he feels, for the spiritual welfare of his beloved offspring. But this expression of his interest—this act—the public dedication of his offspring to God, takes such a form—it has such associations; and gathers around it such motives, as are most likely to awaken and increase its solicitude, and give life, and perseverance, and a saving power to his prayers and exertions for the spiritual good of his children. And is it not reasonable that this should be done?

“Another fact commonly overlooked, will show the reasonableness of dedicating our offspring to God. I refer to the general principle on which the very existence of human society depends. The principle is this. *Parents act for their children in everything which pertains to this life, till they are of sufficient age to act for themselves.* Every parent feels that this is reasonable. Every government, whether Christian or heathen, acknowledges the principle as reasonable, and provides that parents *may*, and *shall* thus act for their children. This is approved by the common reason of mankind. Indeed, it is the very basis of human society. Destroy the principle, and a future generation would never arise on the earth. Now, to dedicate our offspring to God, is simply to *transfer* this principle to *religion*; to act for the benefit of our children in *moral* things, as we do in *temporal* ones. If the child

were of sufficient age, he would be under obligation to dedicate himself to God. But he is a child; he is an infant, and incapable of acting for himself in moral things. The parent must therefore act for him. This is certainly reasonable.”\*

36. The scriptures teach us, that the church, which puts the token of the covenant upon her children, was *precious* in the sight of the Lord; that it was to be *continued*, and *multiplied*, and *glorified*; and *her children be as aforetime*.

Jer. xxx. Thus saith the Lord; “I will multiply them, 19, 20. and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.”

The ancient church of God is called his  
Heb. iii. *house*; that is, his *family*, in which Moses was  
2, 5. a faithful servant. “This is he that was in the  
Acts church in the wilderness.”  
vii. 38.

It is highly important that we should view this church in a true light, such as the scriptures shed upon it. Let us, therefore, now consider a *number of facts*, which the scriptures reveal respecting it.

The ancient church *had many wicked people*  
Psalms *in it*. “But unto the wicked God said, what  
lx. 15. hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that  
lxxviii. thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?  
36, 37. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongue. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.” Thus “some, when they heard, did provoke: howbeit, not all that came out of Egypt  
Heb. iii. by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty  
16—19. years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in  
Rom. because of unbelief.” “Because of unbelief they  
xi. 20. were broken off.”

\* Manuscript Sermon of the Rev. Mr. Rood of Gilmanton.



These passages shew us, that God ~~requir'd true reli-~~  
*gion* of his ancient church. This truth is also taught in  
 the following passages, and many others. "Ye shall be  
*holy*; for I the Lord your God, am holy. And Lev.  
 thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thine* xix. 2.  
*heart*, and with *all thy soul*, and with *all thy* Deut. vi.  
*might*. And these words, I command thee this 5, 6, 7.  
 day, shall be in thine *heart*: And thou shalt teach them  
 diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when  
 thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the  
 way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.  
 This day the Lord thy God hath commanded Deut.  
 thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou xxvi. 16.  
 shalt therefore *keep* and *do* them with *all thine heart*, and  
 with *all thy soul*."

The ancient church *professed true religion*.

"All the people answered together, and said, Exod.  
 All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. Thou xix. 8.  
 hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, Deut.  
 and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, xxvi. 17.  
 and his commandments, and his judgments, and Exod.  
 to hearken unto his voice. xxiv. 3, 7.

Many of the ancient church *practised true religion*.

"Even in the dark and degenerate days of *Elijah*,"  
 when he complained of Israel, that they had forsaken  
 God's covenant, and thrown down his altars, 1 Kings  
 and slain his prophets—even at such a time, xix. 14.  
 God had reserved to himself seven thousand Rom.  
 men, who had not bowed the knee to the image xi. 4.  
 of Baal, "in the kingdom of Israel; besides the numerous  
 people which he had at the same time, in the kingdom  
 of Judah; the fruits of the extensive and remarkable  
 reformation, under the reign of the pious Jehosaphat."

The ancient church was *purchased and redeemed by  
 the blood of Christ*.

"Remember thy congregation which thou Psalm  
 hast purchased of old, the rod of thine inheri- lxiv. 2.  
 tance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion,  
 wherein thou hast dwelt." There never was any other way  
 to Heaven for fallen man, than that which Christ has  
 opened by his atoning blood. He is the way, the truth,  
 and the life. Neither is there salvation in any other;

for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved.

The ancient church was the *bride* of Christ.

Jer. iii. 14. "Saith the Lord, I am married unto you. For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel."

The ancient church was the *flock* of Christ. He was their shepherd. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

The ancient church was a *gospel* church. Gal. iii. 8. The gospel was preached to Abraham. And the covenant, which he embraced, and by which the church in his time was formed, was a gospel covenant, containing a promise of the Saviour whose day Abraham rejoiced to see, and in the faith of whom, Abraham and other good people died. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

God calls his ancient church a *holy* people—a *special* people—a *peculiar* people, and declares that he *loved* them.

Deut. vii. 6, 7, 8. "For thou art a *holy* people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a *special* people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord *loved* you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers.

Deut. xiv. 2. For thou art an *holy* people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a *peculiar* people unto himself. Israel was *holiness* unto the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase. Jer. ii. 3. I have *loved* thee. Yea, I have *loved thee* with an *everlasting love*; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

The ancient church is called the Lord's *portion* and *peculiar treasure*.

"For the Lord's *portion* is his people ; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself ; and Israel for his *peculiar treasure*." In view of these things, as well as many others that might be named, we can plainly see, that although there were many wicked people in the ancient church, yet there were so many of a different character, that the church was *precious* in the sight of the Lord. It was his family. He loved them. They were his portion and peculiar treasure—a holy, special, and peculiar people—the flock and bride of Christ—a gospel church, professing, and many of them practising, true religion, which God required of them. This is the character which God in his word gives of his ancient church, notwithstanding all the *wickedness* and *wicked men* that existed in it.

Deut.  
xxxii. 9.

Psalms  
cxxxv. 4.

I will now show, that, according to the scriptures, this church was to be *continued*. God declared that he had engraven her upon the palms of his hands, and would never leave nor forsake her, but loved her with an everlasting love. And he says, Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. God promised the *Redeemer* to his ancient Zion, and by him to continue and bless her.

Isaiah  
xxvii. 6.

"The *Redeemer* shall come to *Zion*, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord ; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." But the next chapter, the sixtieth of Isaiah, in the most clear and striking manner, speaks of the continuance of the ancient church, and the blessings she would receive in consequence of the coming of Christ, the Redeemer. In this chapter, the Lord reveals to his beloved Zion a great increase of *light*, and *holiness*, and *prosperity* and a great addition of *converts from the gentiles*, till all kings and nations should serve her, or utterly perish. And she should experience

Isaiah  
lix. 20, 21.

Rom. xi.  
26, 27.

a peace and felicity resembling that of Heaven. The chapter begins thus; "Arise, shine; for *thy* light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon *thee*."

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon *thee*, and his glory shall be seen upon *thee*. And the gentiles shall come to *thy* light, and kings to the brightness of *thy* rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to *thee*: *thy* sons shall come from far, and *thy* daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto *thee*, the forces of the *gentiles* shall come unto *thee*."

These things, and others equally precious, were not spoken to *another* church; but to the *ancient* church of God—the *Zion of the Holy One of Israel*. "The sons Ver. 14, also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the *Zion of the Holy One of Israel*. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." If God said these things to his *ancient* church, as he certainly did, and *not* to *another*; and if he meant as he said, then we have good reason for believing that his *ancient* church was continued and blessed—a good reason for believing, that it existed after Christ, and converts were added to it from the gentiles, and its privileges, and prosperity increased—the reason is this; *God declared that these things should be done*. They are done accordingly. So that whatever difference we may find in the church, at different times, still it is one, and the same in the judgment of God, which is according to truth. Its services, since Christ came, are less burdensome and typical, and its privileges greater. It now enjoys the clearer light of a more glorious dispensation of divine grace. And in this time of her great pros-

perity, she is called by a *new name*, according to the prophecy of Isaiah: "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Accordingly, we are told, that "the disciples were called *Christians* first at Antioch."

Isaiah  
lxii. 2.

Acts  
xi. 26.

When the Zion of the Holy One of Israel was on her way to the gospel dispensation, much darkness, and difficulty, and conflict beset her march. But it was the march to certain victory, and glory; for God was on her side. And that she might have strong consolation, her God gave her the exceeding great and precious promises of his everlasting love. She waxed and waned like the moon, or, like the sun, she was at times beclouded, and then shone forth in her Creator's glory. But in her darkest days, her God was with her. On one such day, I hear, that Elijah, the prophet, sent forth his loud lament for Israel, because the prophets of the Lord were slain, and his altars destroyed, and he left alone, and his life sought. But what saith the answer of God unto him: I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even in this time of prevailing darkness, then, the Lord had a church on earth, who were Israelites; to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; who is over all, God blessed forever.

Isaiah  
lx. 14.

Psalm  
xciv. 14.

Isaiah  
xlix. 16.

Jer.  
xxxi. 3.

1 Kings  
xix. 10.

Rom.  
xi. 4.

Rom.  
ix. 4, 5.

Ezek.  
xvi. 14.

Psalm  
lxxxix.  
32—36.

At the time of Elijah, and at many other times, the church was very corrupt, and greatly afflicted and depressed. But there were times, when her renown went forth among the heathen for her beauty, for it was a perfect, through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God. But when his children forsook his law, and walked not in his commandments, he visited their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. But his loving kindness, he did not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. His covenant, the grand charter of



their privileges, and the foundation of their hopes, could not fail. He had established it for an everlasting covenant. It was well ordered in all things and sure. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. It was confirmed of God in Christ, and could not be disannulled. Now I say, that Jesus Christ Gal. iii. 17. was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. He was the messenger of the covenant, Rom. xv. 8. in whom his ancient church delighted. Behold Mal. iii. 1—3. he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. And he did come, like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap ; which is designed, not to destroy the web, or the precious metal, but to refine and purify. Thus Christ came, as a refiner, to purify his people, as gold and silver, that their offerings might be more acceptable to God. He Luke ii. 32. came, a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel, to perform the mercy Luke i. 17. promised unto the fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. He thus appeared in his glory Psalm cii. 16. *to build up* Zion ; and not to demolish her walls, or to lay again her foundation ; for other foundation could not be laid, than that upon which 1 Cor. iii. 11. the church, before Christ and since, is built. Ephes. ii. 20. This foundation is the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom all the building, (his church before his day and since,) fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord.

A person may just as well say, and attempt to prove, that a good man, at different times, is not the same man, as that the church of Christ, before he came, and since, is not the same church. The difference in the church is like that of a good man, at different periods. At one time he appears with one dress ; at another time with another. Corruption prevails at one time, and grace at another. His privileges too, at one time, may be much greater than at any former period. But on the whole, his path shineth more and more, unto the perfect day. So it is with the church. At different times, she appears with a different dress. At one time, she is set forth as clothed in sackcloth ; but at another,

Nehem.  
ix 1.

as clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. At different times, her privileges have been very different, as she has been advancing to the day of millennial glory, and her everlasting triumph. Wickedness has prevailed in the church, more at some times, than at others, and so has faith, purity, and love. At one time, she is backsliding Israel; and is commanded to return unto the Lord; and soon her weeping, and supplications are heard; and she penitently says; "Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God." And he says, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away."

Jer.  
vi. 26.

Rev.  
xi. 1

Hosea  
xiv. 4, 5.

Isaiah  
vi. 10.

Jer.  
iii. 22.

I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine."

Hos.  
xiv.

Observe particularly, the declaration of God, that his church should spread its branches, and its beauty be as the *olive tree*. This is a name he gave to his church. "The Lord called thy name, *a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit*," says the prophet Jeremiah. The church is called by this name, which the Lord before gave it, when it is spoken of in the New Testament by St. Paul.

Jer.  
xi. 16.

He calls the church, "*The olive tree*;" and "*a good olive tree*," from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off; and into which the believing gentiles were engrafted. The gentiles, from time to time, had been engrafted into this olive tree; and the Jews, from time to time, were broken off for their wickedness. But when Christ came, and they rejected him, multitudes of them were broken off for their unbelief, and the gentiles, in greater numbers than before, were engrafted, and partook, with the Jews, of the fatness of the olive tree. Whatever some may think of the Jewish church, it had the richness of the good olive tree. It afforded spiritual nourishment for immortal beings. And the Jews who were broken off,

the apostle tells us, if they continued not in unbelief, should be grafted in.

Let us hear the Apostle more fully upon the subject.  
 Rom xi. 16—27. “If the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches: But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a *good olive tree*; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion a Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them.”

Here notice, that the Deliverer shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and save Israel. Let me ask, what church will the Jews be brought into, when they are turned from their ungodliness and believe in Christ? Will they not be brought into the *Christian* church? No doubt they will. But at the same time, according to scripture, they will be brought into their *own* church, from which, for unbelief, they were excluded. But how could they be grafted into their *own olive tree*, if that tree were destroyed?—if it did not exist? How could they be brought into their *own church*, if there *were* no such church? But they *will* be brought into their own church

—they *will* be grafted into their own olive tree. This church then—this olive tree, *is*, and *must be* continued. And it *is*, and *will be*, *one*, and the *same*, in the sense of the scriptures. Those things which some make essential to the sameness of the church, God does not. He differs from them in his opinion on this point. He does not consider the things, in which the church differs from what it once was, so great, that it is not *one* and the *same*. For he speaks of it as the same, notwithstanding these differences.

In every period, it has had good men, and bad, within its pale. "Revivals, and declensions; divisions and sects; defects, and excellencies; have existed in it, and been common to it, in all past ages." In every period, the church has worshipped God in the same devotional exercises; and been addressed by him in similar language, of approbation, and reproof. The songs of the ancient Zion, composed by the sweet Psalmist, of Israel, are the songs of Zion still, and doubtless always will be. The gospel has been preached to the church from the first. She has ever had access to God through Christ, and derived her consolation from him, and his word. True religion has always been required of her—it has also been professed, and by *many* practised, but never by *all*. The church is the same building, being built, and resting on the same foundation; reared by the same hand; and looking forward to the same high, and holy consummation, in the heavenly world.

Again. The apostle taught the gentiles, that they were no longer aliens from the commonwealth or *church* of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise; but now, says he; "Ye, who sometime were Eph. ii. 13. afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." And the apostle goes on to state *how* this union, between Jews and gentiles, took place. Christ, by his sufferings in the flesh, answered the types of the ceremonial law, and set aside those commandments which were so many and burdensome, and to which the Jews were so much *attached*, and the gentiles so *averse*, as to be a cause of alienation or enmity, and a wall of partition between them; and thus Christ made both one. "For Eph. ii. 14—16. he is our peace, who hath made both one, and

hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace ; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Thus the gentiles were no longer aliens from the commonwealth or *church* of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, as they had been ; for Christ abolished the occasion of enmity, and thus broke down the wall of partition between them ; and made both *one*. And thus too, the condition of the *Jews*, as well as that of the *gentiles*, was so *improved* by Christ, that it was *new*. He Ver. 15. did it for this purpose ; " for to make in himself Ver. of twain one new man, so making peace." 19—21. " Now, therefore," says the apostle, " ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." I add ; God plainly declared, " That the Eph. gentiles should be *fellow-heirs*, and of the *same* iii. 6. *body*, and partakers of the promise in Christ, by the gospel." The gentiles and Jews then, did long ago become fellow-heirs ; that is, heirs together of the same inheritance, and of the same body. The good olive tree received the gentiles, when they were engrafted, to partake of its fatness equally with its own natural branches, which were not broken off.

Let me add one more fact. During all the time that Christ was refining, and purifying, and building up his church ; from the commencement of his public labors to his death,—during all this time, his apostles were members of the Jewish church : and during this time, and all the time that the apostles labored, there is no account of the formation of another church, *distinct* from the one that then existed. Those who were converted on the day of Pentecost, were not formed into a *new* church ; but Acts they were *added* to the church that then existed. ii. 41. " There were *added unto them* about three thousand souls."

From what has been said, the evidence is clear and decisive, that the church, *before* Christ, and *since*, is, in the sense of scripture, *one* and the *same* church—the same which the Lord called, “*A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit*”—the same Jer. xi. 16. “*good olive tree*,” into which the gentiles were engrafted, after Christ finished his labors on the earth. If we keep this in mind, that the church, with all its increase of light and graces, before Christ and since, is one and the same—if we keep this in mind, it will help us greatly in understanding her *duties* and *privileges*, at different periods. For *every institution*, which God established in his church, remains, supported by all his authority, till he sets it aside. *Every law*, he has given his church, is binding, till he repeals it. And *every privilege*, God has granted to his church, is her’s, till he takes it away.

Now, one *institution*, which God established in his church, was the connexion of children with their parents in his holy covenant. This institution, he has not set aside. It is then still an established institution of God, which no one has any right to set aside, and which the church has no right to give up. The established covenant connexion *itself* and the *token* of it, are two distinct things. Circumcision, the token, *has* been set aside; but the covenant connexion *itself*, *has not*. There is no evidence of it in the bible. There is evidence that it was made a wrong use of; but no evidence that it was set aside. And how many times need the institution be established, if it is never done away? Is not *once* enough? Shall Christians manifest the disposition of Balaam, and require God to speak the *second* time, before they can believe he is in earnest? The change of the token, does not alter the covenant relation of *children*, any more than that of their *parents*. It does not break or alter the covenant relation in *either* case.

Again. One *law*, which God gave to his church, was, that the infants, who are included with their parents in covenant, should have its *token* applied to them—that *their* covenant relation, and that of their *parents*, should be marked with the same religious rite—that the *same rite*, by which professing parents were received to the church, should be applied to their children. This law,

God has never repealed, therefore, it is still binding. The authority of God is still engaged to support it. There is no intimation in scripture, that this law is repealed. Neither is there anything in scripture to show, that the *new* token of the covenant is not as *proper*, and should not be *applied* to the infants of believers, as much as the *old* one. I know it is said, that true religion was required of those who were baptized; and I know also, that true religion was required of those who were circumcised. In both cases, however, it was required of those who were capable of it. But this requirement did not exclude infants from the kingdom of Heaven, or from a covenant connexion with the church, or the token of such a connexion.

Once more. God granted his church this *privilege*; that their children should be included with them in his holy covenant, and connected with his church, in such a manner, as to give them a right to the token of his covenant, and profit them much every way. This privilege, God has never taken away from his church. It is then her privilege still. And why should she doubt or hesitate to improve it? Is it beyond the grasp of her faith, because it is so *great*? Or is it beneath her notice, because it is so *small*? God has never taken it from her. Can we then wonder that he does not *give* it to her again, if he really means that she shall have it? This privilege is a religious connexion, which God has never broken. Can we then wonder that he does not *form* it again? How often should the Lord make the offer of his privileges, before they should be received and improved? Is he so changeable, that we cannot trust him? Or did he need to try the experiment to know whether it would do to have infants sustain a religious connexion with his church?

The church of God, we must remember, is *one* and the *same*; and so are the institutions he has established, and not set aside—the laws he has given, and not repealed—the privileges he has granted and not taken away. The church may for a time suffer, and so may the covenant connexion of her children. But who will be the instruments of this? Will the church, of her own will, without any direction from God, cut off her children from the

privileges of their covenant connexion, to which God has given them a right which he has not taken away, and by which he designs to bless them? This connexion between parents and children, in God's holy covenant, is a link in that golden chain which he has let down from Heaven to save a dying world. But some suppose, that long ago, this link was broken and thrown away. But who did it? The Lord did not do it. Did his church? O! if she did, the deed was done somewhere upon her march to the present time; for she is one and the same church. But *where*, and *when* was this deed of cruelty done? I say deed of cruelty; for I mean the deed of breaking a connexion by which God intended to save immortal beings. And I inquire *when*, and *where* it was done; for the time and place must have been distinctly marked. Then and there, some sentence must have dropped from the lips of God like this; "The daughter of my people is become cruel like the Ostriches in the wilderness." Lam.  
iv. 3.

But let us return to the tree of the Lord, under whose shadow we may rest with delight. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations. It affords the oil of consolation, and the olive branch of peace. Here, beside the good olive, let us reflect, and receive instruction. But, behold! how unlike are its branches! What disproportion of privileges! What occasion of alienation, and discord among brethren! What occasion of *envy* on the one hand, and *pride* on the other! And how imperfect the symmetry of the tree, if some of its branches have their tender sprouts connected with them, and flourish together, while others are stripped of all their tender sprouts, and have nothing left to partake of the fatness of the good olive, but their own naked branches! What a difference, if the connexion, between the natural branches and their tender sprouts, was formed, and beautified, and glorified; but in the case of the engrafted branches, never suffered to exist, or broken in its formation! But this disproportion of privileges between the Jews and gentiles, under the Christian dispensation, is *directly*, and *plainly* contrary to scripture. The connexion, between the natural branches of the good olive, and their tender sprouts; or between the Jews and their infant offspring, is good, and strong;



for God has not broken it. Throughout the tree, the connexion is the same that it always was, even this; "*if the root be holy so are the branches;*" that is; *holy in a covenant sense.* And this connexion, in the tree, holds good, with respect to the engrafted branches, as well as the others. Throughout the tree, even to its tender sprouts, the connexion is this; "*if the root be holy so are the branches.*" And as far as this connexion extends, *so far the token of it should extend also.*

37. The arguments and objections brought against infant baptism, may, with as much propriety and force, be brought against *other* truths.

It is said there is no plain command, declaration, nor example, for baptizing infants. This may be said, for it is true, respecting *female communion.* There is no plain command, declaration, nor example, for this ordinance. When Christ instituted the sacramental supper, the twelve apostles only were present. I might further illustrate this point; but it is needless, for it is a plain case. I have no doubt, however, that female communion is a duty. It may be conclusively proved by a process of reasoning; but still there is no plain command, declaration, nor example for it, in all the bible.

The same may be said of the *Christian sabbath.* But still, the evidence is so clear and full that keeping the Christian sabbath is a duty, that the man who denies it gives fearful proof of his infidelity.\* Many good people, who do not practise infant baptism, comfort themselves, by saying; there is no plain command, declaration, nor example for baptizing infants. And the sabbath breaker tries to comfort *himself* in the same way. And those who do not believe in female communion, may have the same comfort; and they may all be comforted without good reason. But the most powerful argument, used against infant baptism, is this; "*Believe and be baptized.*" But the misfortune, attending this argument, is, that it is not found in the bible. It is often mistaken for this passage; "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*" But this passage may certainly, as well be brought against the

\* I do not mean by this to call my Baptist brethren infidels, although some of them do not believe in the divine authority of the Christian sabbath. If this fact is disputed I will furnish the evidence.

*salvation* of infants, as their *baptism*. For it is as plain, that persons must believe before they are *saved*, as it is, that they must believe before they are *baptized*. But who believes that all infants are lost ?

It is also objected against infant baptism, that the universal practice of it would do away the practice of the apostles, in baptizing persons after they believed. But when there are so many Christians in the world, that, practising as we do, all the infants are baptized, then, our circumstances will be very different from those of the apostles. And will any say, that we ought *not* to do differently from the apostles, when we are in *different circumstances* from them ? It may as well be said, that we *ought* to do differently in the *same circumstances*. For it is as proper to do *differently* from the apostles, when we are in *their* circumstances, as it is *not* to do differently from them, when we are in *different* circumstances.

38. It is evident from *history*, that infant baptism was practised in the time of the apostles, and many hundred years after.

*Hermas*, who lived at the same time with St. Paul, and is mentioned by him, (Rom. 16, 14,) says,

“The baptism of water is necessary to all.”

*Irenæus* says, “Christ came to save all persons, who by him are regenerated (or baptized) unto God ; infants, little ones, youths and elderly persons.” “The ancient Fathers, as customarily used the word *regeneration*, for *baptism*, as the church of England now use the word christening. *Justin Martyr*, speaking of some particular persons who had been baptized, says ; “They were regenerated in the same way of regeneration in which we have been regenerated ; for they are *washed with water*, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” “In this short sentence, the word *regeneration* or *regenerated*, is put for *baptism*, no less than three times.” The importance which the ancient Fathers attached to baptism, is probably one reason of their using the word *regeneration*, to signify the same thing. Also they may have been led to this, by the manner in which Christ, and the apostle Paul speak of baptism. They used a similar language. Christ said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again—except he be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God." 'By this new birth, Christ evidently had reference to water baptism, as *truly*, as to the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The apostle Paul calls baptism, "the washing of regeneration."' *Irenæus* expressly calls *baptism, regeneration*, and says, that infants were *regenerated*; that is, *baptized*. 'His testimony is plain and full; and cannot be doubted by any person acquainted with the phraseology of the Fathers. He mentions not only *old* persons, and *youth*; but also *little ones*, and even *infants*. This *Irenæus* was bishop of Lyons, in France. According to Mr. Dodwell, he was born before the death of St. John—was brought up in Asia, where that apostle had lived, and died. He was acquainted with Polycarp, and in his younger years had often heard him preach. Polycarp was John's disciple; had been chosen by him to be bishop of Smyrna—and was probably that angel of the church so highly commended in the second chapter of Revelation. *Irenæus* and those Christians who lived in an age so near the apostles, and in a place where one of them had so lately resided, could not be ignorant—they must have known what the apostolic practice was, with respect to infant baptism—a matter of the most notorious and public nature.'

*Justin Martyr*, 'who was born about *four*, and wrote about *forty* years after the apostle John,' says, "We have not received the *carnal*, but *spiritual* circumcision, by baptism. And it is enjoined, on all persons to receive it in the same way." He here evidently considers baptism as being in the place of circumcision, and consequently, like that ancient rite, designed for *infants*, as well as for adults.'

*Origen*, who was born *eighty-five* years after the apostles, says; "Infants by the usage of the church are baptized.—Infants are baptized for the remission of sins.—It is for this reason that infants are baptized, because by the sacrament of baptism our pollution is taken away—the church had a tradition or command from the apostles, to give baptism to infants." 'These testimonies of *Origen*, are full and unequivocal. They put the matter in debate beyond all reasonable doubt, if any credit can be given to them; and no reason appears why they should not be credited. It is true they are taken from Latin translations. *Origen* wrote in the Greek language. But

the fidelity of the translators, and the authenticity of these passages, have been sufficiently vindicated by Dr. Wall, even to the entire satisfaction of all impartial inquirers. None will object but those persons who are disposed to cavil.' Some persons, however, are much displeased to hear us say anything about *apostolic tradition*. Let us therefore hear what St. Paul says with respect to *traditions*; "Therefore, Brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the *tradition* which he received of us. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, (the *traditions*,) as I delivered them to you." 'The apostle was here speaking of Christian ordinances, which he calls traditions. The original word signifies traditions, and is so rendered by our translators in the other forecited passages.'

2 Thes.  
ii. 15.

2 Thes.  
iii. 6.

1 Cor.  
xi. 2.

'Origen has expressly informed us that infant baptism was practised in his time. With respect to this matter of fact, Origen was certainly a competent witness; and he had every opportunity and advantage for knowing what had been the practice of the apostles. He was one of the most learned men of the age,—travelled extensively—resided for some time in several of the most eminent churches; and spent the greatest part of his life in Syria, and Palestine. His ancestors were Christians for several generations. It is very remarkable that this fact was so accurately ascertained. The occasion was this. Porphyry, a great enemy to Christianity, had represented the Christians as being an ignorant people. But not being able to conceal the repute of Origen, pretended that he had been at first a heathen, and learned their philosophy. In order to confute this falsehood, Eusebius set forth his Christian descent. He had himself undoubtedly been baptized in his infancy, and must have known the practice of the apostles respecting infant baptism; for his grandfather, or at least, his great-grandfather, lived in the apostolic times; and they both were Christians. This is the man who has expressly declared, that infants were

baptized in his day; and that the church was directed, by an order or *tradition* from the apostles, to baptize them.'

*Tertullian*, who lived at the same time with Origen, says "It is most expedient to defer baptism, and to regulate the administration of it, according to the *condition*, the *disposition*, and the age of the persons to be baptized; and especially in the case of little ones. What is there that should compel this innocent age to receive baptism." 'He advises to delay their baptism, not because it was *unlawful*, for he allows it in case of necessity; but because the sponsors were often brought into a snare, and because he imagined that sins committed after baptism were next to unpardonable. He accordingly advises, that *unmarried* persons be kept from this ordinance, until they either marry, or are confirmed in continence. His advising to a *delay*, shows that infant baptism was *practised*, for otherwise, there would have been *no room* for advice.'

*Cyprian*, and the *Council of Carthage*. One Fidus proposed to Cyprian, and Cyprian proposed to the Council, this question,—Whether an infant might be baptized *before he was eight days old*? Cyprian, and the whole council of sixty-six ministers, agreed, unanimously, "That an infant might be baptized on the *second* or *third* day, or at *any* time after its birth." In their letter to Fidus, their brother, they say; "As to the case of infants, whereas, you judge that they must not be baptized within *two*, or *three* days after they are born, and that the law of the ancient circumcision is to be observed, we were all in our assembly of quite a different opinion." The meeting of the Council, by which this was said, was only *one hundred and fifty-three* years after the apostolic age.

*Clementine Constitutions*. "*Baptize your infants*, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of God."

*Questions and Answers to the Orthodox*. 'In this celebrated work, which is ascribed to Justin Martyr, there are' "inquiries into the different states of those children, at the general resurrection, who *were* and who *were not baptized*."

*Apostolic Constitutions*. 'In this *very ancient*, though not inspired book,' "there is *express mention of infant baptism* as commanded by Christ."

*Jerome, Gregory, Ambrose, and Chrysostom*, all wrote between two hundred and *fifty*, and two hundred and *seventy-four* years after the apostolic age. Jerome says "If infants be not baptized, the sin of omitting their baptism is laid to the *parents'* charge." Gregory observes, that "Infants should be baptized to consecrate them to Christ in their infancy." Ambrose declares, "The baptism of infants was the practice of the apostles, and has ever been in the church till this time." Chrysostom says; "Persons may be baptized, either in their infancy, in middle age, or in old age."

*Augustine*, (or *Austin*, as he is sometimes called,) about two hundred and eighty years after the apostles, asserted in his writings, "That infant baptism is one of those practices which was not instituted by any council, but has *always* been in use.—The whole church of Christ have constantly held that infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sin." He adds, "That he had *never read, or heard, of any Christian, Catholic, or sectary who held otherwise.*"

*Pelagius* says; "Baptism ought to be administered to infants, with the same sacramental words, which are used in the case of adult persons. *Men slander me*, as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants. I never *heard* of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants."

*Celestius* says; "As for infants, I always said they stand in need of baptism, and ought to be baptized, according to the rule of the universal church."

'*Pelagius* and *Celestius*, lived at the same time, and believed the same doctrine. They wrote about three hundred years after the apostles. They held that infants were born free from any natural, or sinful defilements. Their chief opposers were St. Jerome, and St. Austin; who constantly urged against them this argument; "*Infants are by all Christians acknowledged to stand in need of baptism*, which must be *for original sin*, since they have no other. If they have no sin, why are they then *baptized*, according to the *rule of the church*, for the forgiveness of sins?" '*Pelagius* and *Celestius* felt this argument deeply. They were extremely puzzled and embarrassed with it. They knew not how to evade, or surmount its force, without involving themselves in

greater difficulties. But had the baptism of infants not been practised by the apostles, and the churches they instituted, it certainly would have been very easy for Pelagius and Celestius to answer the argument with which they were pressed by Jerome and Austin; for it would have been enough to deny the truth of it. Was this however the method they took to answer their opponents and triumph over them? Indeed it was not. When some said that Pelagius by denying the pollution of infants, denied baptism to them also, he complained of it as slander. "Men slander me," says he, "as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants. I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants." Celestius also confessed "that infants were to be baptized according to the rule of the universal church." 'One of these men was born and educated at Britain, and the other in Ireland. They both lived a long time at Rome, the centre of the world, and the place to which all people resorted. Celestius settled at Jerusalem; and Pelagius travelled among all the principal churches of Europe, Asia, and Africa. If there had been any number of churches, or a single church, in any part of the world, not only in *that*, but in the *preceding* ages, who denied the baptism of infants, these learned and sagacious persons must have known, or heard of it; and certainly, they would have mentioned it, in order to check the triumph of their opposers, and destroy, at once, the argument by which they were sorely pressed. It is evident there was no society of Baptists then in the world; nor had there been any of that denomination within the memory of man. The confession of Pelagius and Celestius, amounts almost to demonstration. It proves, beyond all reasonable doubt, that infant baptism had universally obtained, and had always been practised among Christians, even from the apostolic times.'

'*Dr. Wall*, who enjoyed the best advantages for being acquainted with the history of infant baptism, and who made this the principal subject of his studies, and inquiries, briefly sums up the evidence, on both sides, in the following words; ' "Lastly. For the first four hundred years, there appears only one man, Tertullian, who *advised the delay* of infant baptism, in *some cases*; and one Gregory, who did perhaps practise such delay, in the

case of his own children ; but no society of men so thinking, or so practising, or any *one* man saying that it was *unlawful* to baptize infants. So in the next seven hundred years, there is not so much as one man to be found, who either *spoke for*, or *practised* any such delay, but all the contrary. And when, about the year eleven hundred and thirty, one sect among the Waldenses, or Albigenes, declared against the baptizing of infants, because they thought them incapable of salvation, the main body of that people rejected their opinion; and they who held that opinion, quickly dwindled away and disappeared; there being no more persons heard of, holding that tenet, until the rising of the German Baptists; in the year *fifteen hundred and twenty-two*.”\*

The Waldenses have exhibited a character which has deeply interested real Christians of all denominations. “The purity and simplicity of that religion which these good men taught, the spotless innocence that shone forth in their lives and actions, and the noble contempt of riches and honors which was conspicuous in the whole of their conduct and conversation, appeared so engaging to all such as had any sense of true piety, that the number of their followers daily increased.”

If more has been said in praise of this interesting people, by any *one* denomination than by others, it is, most probably, the Baptist. One reason of this is, many of our Baptist brethren have considered the Waldenses as agreeing with them in sentiment. But the Waldenses baptize their infants.

In the year 1825, the Rev. Sereno E. Dwight of Boston, visited the Waldenses; and Mr. Bert, a minister among them, and moderator of the Waldensian synod, told Mr. Dwight, “that *the Waldenses had always baptized their infants, and always done it by affusion*.” We have this account in the Recorder and Telegraph, for the 12th of March, 1825.

The circumstances which have led some into the belief, that the Waldenses were Baptists, are probably the two following: First, the name Waldenses has sometimes

\* In making out this historical account, I have depended chiefly on the Rev. Messrs. Pond, Tenney, and Dr. Wilson. From them, chiefly, this historical account is quoted.



been used in such a general sense, as to include the Petrusians, who did deny infant baptism. Secondly, the Waldenses were unwilling that their children should be baptized by the *Romish priests*, because they detested the human inventions annexed to that holy sacrament, which they looked upon as a pollution of it. Hence the priests charged them with denying infant baptism.

Our Baptist brethren acknowledge, that infant baptism was practised within *one hundred years* after the apostolic age. Says Mr. Judson; "This practice, *no doubt*, commenced in the latter part of the second second century."\* He and other Baptist brethren tell us, that Tertullian opposed "the baptism of infants," about *one hundred years* after the apostles. "His treatment of this subject," says Mr. Judson, "*leads us to conclude*, that infant baptism was then a novel practice, just beginning, and approved by very few." "His words," says Mr. Judson,† "are as follows;" "Jesus Christ says indeed, 'hinder not little children from coming to me;' but that they should come to him, as soon as they are advanced in years, as soon as they have learned their religion, when they may be taught whither they are going, when they are become Christians, when they begin to be able to know Jesus Christ. What is there, that should compel this innocent age to receive baptism? And since they are not yet allowed the disposal of temporal goods, is it reasonable, that they should be intrusted with the concerns of heaven?" This is Tertullian's *treatment* of the subject of infant baptism, which brother Judson says, "*leads us to conclude*,‡ that infant baptism was then a novel practice, just beginning, and approved by very few." I do marvel, that brother Judson should be led, in such a way, to such a conclusion. Tertullian considered sins committed *after* baptism much greater than those committed *before*. He therefore opposed the baptism of infants, (or to speak more properly,) advised to the delay of their baptism, and also the baptism of those who were *unmarried*. "His treatment of this subject" leads *me* to conclude very differently from what it has led brother Judson. It leads me to conclude that infant baptism was *not* then "a new

\* Sermon, page 35.

† Ibid. page 34.

‡ This is the manner in which Mr. J. is led to conclude, through a great part of his sermon.

practice, just beginning, and approved by very few." I will tell you why it leads me to conclude in this manner. If infant baptism were a *new* practice, just beginning in the time of Tertullian, it was then, contrary to the practice of the church, and contrary to the practice of the apostles, and also contrary to the word and will of God; and the advantages of Tertullian, for opposing it, were very great; and he would have improved them. He might have appealed to the whole church as *knowing the fact*, and called upon all to bear him witness, that they had never before practised infant baptism—that the apostles did not practise it—and that they did not teach the church to practise it; and that the church had no right to do it; for the *will* and *word* of God, made known by the apostles, and followed by the church, was against infant baptism. It would have been very easy for Tertullian to have shown this, if infant baptism, in his time, had been a new practice. And he would have improved these *many* and *great* advantages, to support, and give weight to his own opinion. He, and the church too, must have known her *own practice*, and the *practice of the apostles*. And he would not, therefore, have opposed infant baptism in his own strength, expressing merely his own feelings, if he could have brought the opinion and practice of the apostles, and the whole church of Christ to his support, and the strength of the *Lord of Hosts too*. How great the folly of that man, who lifts his puny finger to stay the progress of a tempest, when, at a word, he could call forth the almighty arm of his God, to protect him, and control the elements—so great is the folly of the man who lifts his *own* voice, merely to oppose a dangerous error, when he could *say* and *prove*, "*Thus saith the Lord, and thus his church have practised.*" Tertullian would have *improved* such advantages when they were in his *own favor*, and as plain to be seen, and pointed at, as the sun in a clear day. But he went forward alone, and never mentioned the practice of the church, or the practice of the apostles, or the will of God, or an argument from his word, or the opinion of *any one*, in favor of his advice to delay infant baptism. These are the reasons why his treatment of infant baptism, leads *me* to conclude that it was *not* a new practice, just beginning. And are they not good reasons? Would he not have used advantages

so great and so easily to be seen and handled if he possessed such advantages? that is, if the word of God, and the practice of the apostles and the whole church, were in his favor. If not, he must have been a dull lawyer\* indeed! There might have been, it seems, the truth, and a thousand witnesses on his side, and yet he lose an important case in court, because he did not happen to think during the whole time of the trial, that there was any evidence in his favor, while all the witnesses were at hand, and he knew it. For he merely *advises* to delay *infant* baptism, as he did the baptism of the *unmarried*; not because it was unlawful, but because the sponsors were often brought into a snare, and because he imagined that sins committed *after* baptism were next to unpardonable. And his treatment of this subject, affords much evidence, that the practice of the apostles, and the churches they planted, was not in his *favor*, but *against* him, on the subject of infant baptism.

*An Address to those who have been dedicated to God in baptism by pious parents, but have not devoted themselves to him.*

Ye beloved, ye precious immortals, how highly favored, how highly honored of God! What hath he done for you? It reminds us of the tender care of the gentle shepherd, who gathereth the lambs in his arms and carrieth them in his bosom. It also reminds us of the fond mother, whose affections entwine her infant offspring, and hold them back from danger and from death. But it exceeds the shepherd's tenderness, and the mother's love. It is greater than either, and more noble and touching than both. It is the compassion and melting tenderness of a God, to the seed of his chosen, and the children of his covenant.

Yes, my dear friends, no eye like God's pitied you in feeble and helpless infancy. And no arm like his was extended in kindness to save. And was not the pity of a God as precious then as ever? Could he not then covenant as well, and bestow his blessings as well? And should he not be loved as well, and served as faithfully for his kindness then as ever? Though he might have said to you, as he did to Peter; "What I do thou knowest not now but

\* Tertullian was once a lawyer.

thou shalt know hereafter." Yet he now shows you that it was a time of love, and that you should love him for what he did. He made you the objects of his special attention and favor, in the constitution of his covenant, and the application of the token. He placed you in a situation eminently favorable to your salvation. You sustain a relation to God and his people, which he has ever regarded with peculiar interest, distinguished with special blessings, and crowned with glory and honor. And will you sell your birthright for the pleasure of living in sin? Will you despise the honor which God has so kindly bestowed upon you? Can you be so ungrateful as thus to abuse his goodness, or trample upon his authority, by disregarding his holy covenant? Can you thus deny the *right* and the *special right*, which God asserts to the children of his people? or the difference he has made between them and others? or your own peculiar obligations to be his, wholly and forever? Oh! if you do this, you may read your awful doom in the sentence that Moses pronounced against him that disregarded the covenant of the Lord: "The Lord will not spare him, but then the Deut.  
anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke xxix. 20.  
against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." But if you would escape this fearful doom, let the goodness of God lead you to repentance. Acknowledge with gratitude what your parents did for you, when they needed encouragement as much as ever, and were as praiseworthy for receiving and improving it, by taking hold of the covenant, and accepting the pledge of promised mercy to their children. This pledge, this token of the covenant, was applied to you. Now ratify this deed, by acknowledging it as your own; by subscribing with your own hand unto the Lord, and giving him your heart. To this duty you are now urged, by the favor of God, which is life, and his frown, which is death.

*An Address to Christians, who believe in the perpetuity of the covenant established with Abraham, and in the ordinance of infant baptism.*

Ye followers of Christ, this subject is not a matter of dry speculation, or of useless argument. Often has it

enkindled the fire of devotion upon the altar of God, in public and in private. It has power to move the heart, and regulate the life. Here is scope for mighty prayer, and ample encouragement for every tender feeling that gathers in the bosom. It is often mentioned, and referred to by private Christians, by prophets, and apostles with the deepest interest. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; and that he should make such rich and abundant manifestations of his peculiar favor toward our children. How precious the assurance of God, that his church, by the provisions of his grace, shall be continued, and multiplied, in the conversion of her offspring.

Isaiah  
lix. 21. "This is my covenant, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." For the accomplishment of this purpose of love and mercy, the Lord has made ample provision; and while he stoops from his throne, attentive to your wants, and the wants of your children, he grants you the *honor* and *privilege*, and urges upon you the *duty* of being workers together with him, in preparing them for his service, and the joys of his kingdom. Oh then how lamentable! how sinful is it, that the obligations involved in baptism are so little felt and so much neglected! What occasion for weeping, that the Lord should receive such ungrateful returns for the love he bears us! Persons are found, *from fifteen to twenty years of age*, who are ignorant of the fact, that in infancy they were dedicated to God. Surely, brethren, we are guilty. This is manifest to all. And this is the most weighty argument against infant baptism. It passes with many for demonstration. But it is in our power, to destroy this argument that is brought against us, and to return one equally weighty in our favor. And shall it not be done? O ye followers of Christ, think of the *natural* and *covenant relation* you sustain to your children; how tender and endearing! how responsible and important! How has God *honored* it! What *attention* has he given it! What *blessings* bestowed upon it. What *encouragement* presented, in the promises and token of the covenant, with their glorious fulfilment, in the conversion of chil-

dren, and the joy of their parents. In view of these things, what should be our feelings? What penitence should they excite for the past, and resolutions for the future! How should they abase us before God; inspire our prayers; swell our songs; and invigorate our exertions. How great the condescension, compassion and mercy, in which God here meets us and our children. How powerful the appeal he makes to our hearts! How pathetic and melting the paternal tenderness with which he invites us near to himself! With all this fresh in mind, let us remember that his cause which we have espoused, is *bleeding*. The system of truth which is dear to him, which has been sealed with a Saviour's blood, and to which we have pledged our full support, is *suffering*. Yea, this system, through sympathy with one of its members, is *suffering*, by the violation of our covenant obligations, and baptismal vows. Like the human system, when one member suffers, all the others suffer with it. A schism is made in the *body* of divine truth. Its energy is impaired, and its beauty marred. But when one member is honored, all the rest rejoice with it. And when every member is honored, then will the whole appear in its glory, resplendent, beautiful, and quickening, as the orb of day. Then will Zion be rid of the reproach, under which she now labors. And if at present her children are so blessed, while she is so negligent of her covenant vows, and baptismal obligations, what may we not expect, when she shall awake to all her duty, and act worthy of her exalted privileges? All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. The Lord will pour his Spirit upon the seed of his church, and his blessing upon her offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. But this day will not come, till we unitedly resolve with Joshua, As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord; and this resolution must be followed up. It must be *acted out*. And have you not most solemnly pledged yourselves to do this? Surely you have, if you have dedicated yourselves and

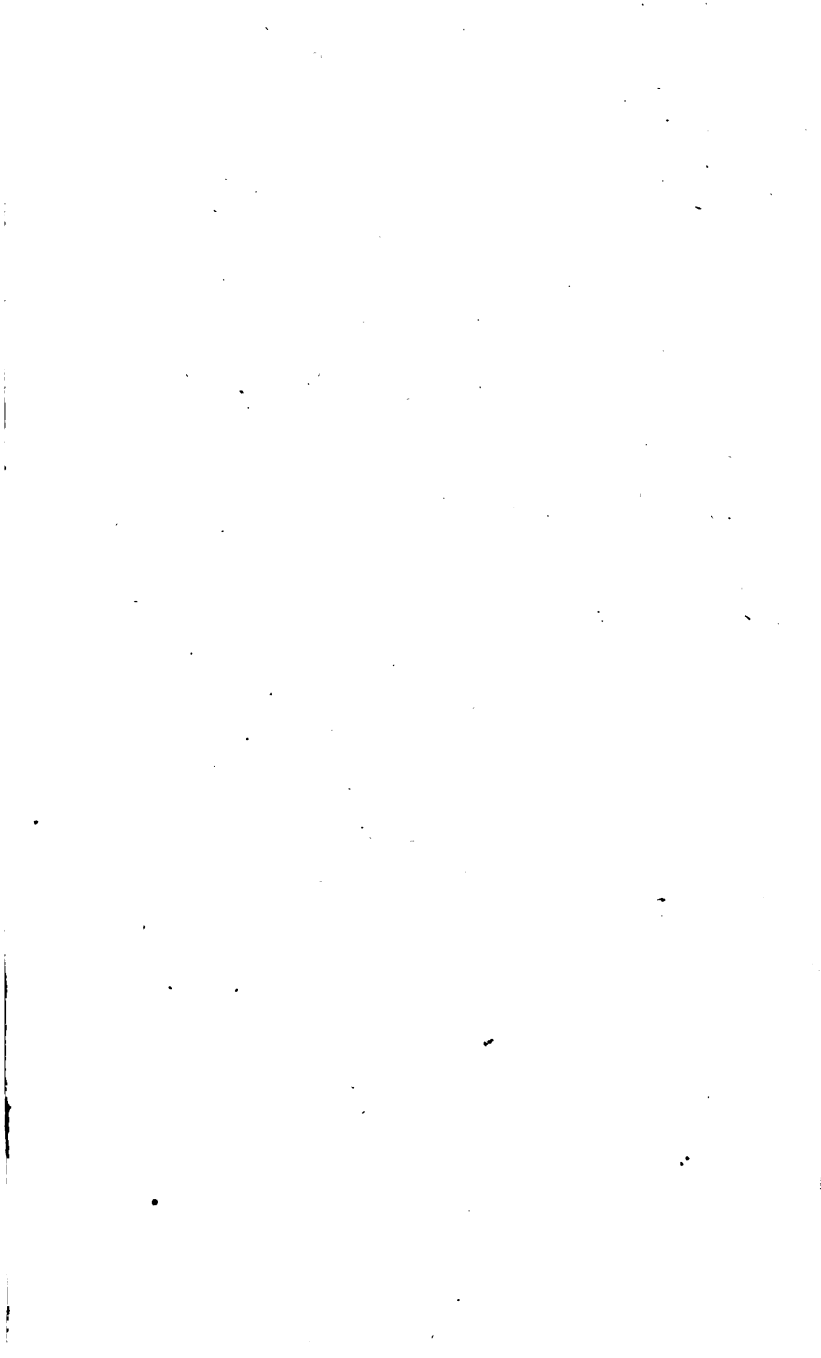
Isaiah  
liv. 13.

Isaiah  
xliv. 3—5.

Joshua  
xxiv. 15.

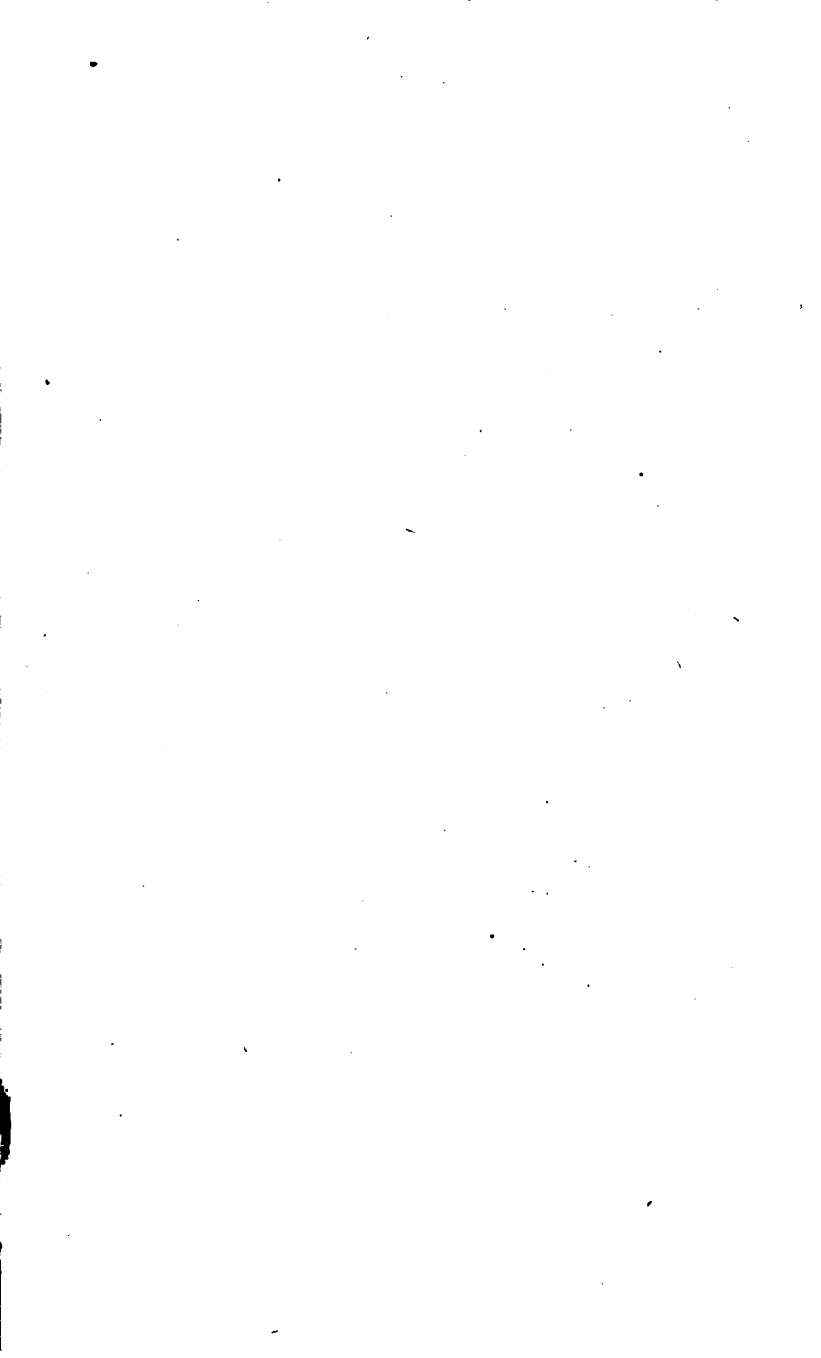
households to God. In doing this you acknowledged the *right* and the *special right*, which God asserts to you and your children ; your special obligation to train them up for him ; the great encouragement he had given you to do it, and your solicitude for their welfare. Before God, angels, and men, you made an acknowledgement of these, and other kindred truths. And now, my Christian friends, the question is held in awful suspense, whether you will illustrate and *confirm* this acknowledgement, or *contradict* it ; and thus dishonor Christ, by leading others to believe that you acted the part of the hypocrite, and that your baptismal vows were solemn mockery. I wait in fearful anxiety for the answer ; for the glory of God ; the welfare of Zion, and the salvation of souls is here depending. Let this subject then always be dear to you, for such is the covenant of God with his people, and such its relation to their children, that it has ever been dear to him and to his beloved Zion. This is her comfort in affliction. It was her support in the wilderness, and encouraged by this, she came up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved, and rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God. It sheds the light of life upon the darkness of the fall, and opens upon the dying eye, bright visions of the world above. Thither it lights our path and leads our way. We journey in its light, and labor by its hope. And it should be *increasingly* dear to Zion, for it is now illumined with a clearer light, and this is the dawning of a brighter day. Awake then, ye Christians, to this subject ; discharge the duties ; fulfil the obligations that are recognized in the covenant and token, and then, light shall burst from that cloud of darkness which now envelopes the church, and carry conviction of guilt to the hearts, of unfaithful parents, and enforce, and re-enforce parental duty. Then shall Zion arise and shine, her light being come, and the glory of the Lord being risen upon her. *And her SEED shall be known among the gentiles, and her OFFSPRING among the people : all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the SEED which the Lord hath blessed.*

Isaiah  
lxi. 9.









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